

## U.S. asylum for Castro's daughter

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alma Fernandez Revuelta, daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro, has left Cuba and been granted political asylum in the United States, a State Department official said Wednesday. Ms. Fernandez, who is about 40 and has long been a critic of her father's revolution, departed Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Atlanta Tuesday afternoon after her asylum request was granted. She left behind a teenage daughter in Cuba, the official said, adding that her whereabouts were unknown. Mr. Castro's daughter was quoted in a book published last year as saying that her father's Marxist rule in Cuba was "a dead-end street." She said reforms must come soon, but she doesn't think her father will be the one to implement them. "Strictly speaking, Fidel is a tyrant," she said. The interview was contained in Andres Oppenheimer's book, "Castro's final hour." Ms. Fernandez wished to leave the island for years but could never receive permission. The circumstances of her departure on Monday for Madrid were not clear.

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## No PLO aid without proper bodies — Denmark

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Danish Prime Minister Poul Rasmussen voiced strong support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel peace accord here Wednesday but warned the PLO it would not get massive aid pledges until proper institutions are built up. Denmark has set aside \$40 million for the Palestinians and wanted to focus the aid on concrete projects for health, education, the environment and human rights, Mr. Rasmussen told a press conference. "It is essential, however, that Palestinian institutions capable of administering the assistance be established as quickly as possible," he said after meeting a PLO delegation led by Faisal Husseini. "I made it clear that our continued assistance on a national basis and within the European union is very much dependent on the creation of the necessary administration structures within the PLO," Mr. Rasmussen said. Europe has pledged \$600 million. "Denmark wants to see its assistance as a concrete effort to peace," The Palestinians have asked for aid to be channelled directly through the PLO immediately.

## Clinton denies using guards for affairs

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton told Wednesday that during his 12 years as Arkansas governor he did not use bodyguards to arrange or hide extramarital affairs. "We did nothing wrong," said Mr. Clinton in an interview with international news agencies. "I just have nothing to say about this," he added in making his first comments on the allegations. Two state troopers in Mr. Clinton security detail while he was governor of Arkansas have alleged that they helped arrange or cover up extramarital affairs for the president. Mr. Clinton referred reporters to a statement by senior aide Bruce Lindsey, who called the allegations "ridiculous." Mr. Clinton said: "I think we have cleared it up. I just think the statement speaks for itself. I just think it is not appropriate in a situation like this for me to do more than I'm doing."

## Tomb of Isaiah found in Galilee

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The tomb of the Biblical Prophet Isaiah was recently uncovered in Galilee in northern Israel, the chief Rabbi of the town of Safed, Samuel Eliahu, said Wednesday. The tomb was recently found buried under rocks and earth near the kibbutz of Bar-Am and has already become a draw for pilgrims, he told AFP. The Israeli department of antiquities has not yet authenticated the find. Prophet Isaiah lived from 746 to 701 B.C. and his prophecies spoke of a divine power.

## 22 killed in Kurdish fighting

ERBIL (AFP) — At least 22 people have been killed in two days of heavy fighting between rival Kurdish groups in northeastern Iraq, officials reported here Wednesday. Forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the pro-Iranian Islamic League of Kurdistan clashed in Halabja, Chiamchal, Koyan, Rakia, Chakurna, Shaklawa and Khailan, they said. PUK officials and deputies in the Kurdish parliament said the PUK had captured Islamic League offices and bases in the past 24 hours. A large number of people were reported wounded. A major road from Erbil to Sulaymaniyah was closed because of the clashes, and U.N. officials in the region were ordered not to travel.

## Djohar headed for victory in Comoros

NAIROBI (R) — Comoros Islands President Mohammad Said Djohar was headed for victory Wednesday in violent legislative elections during which at least three people were killed, officials said. Kombo Suleimane, head of state-run Radio Comoros, told Reuters in Nairobi by telephone from the capital Moroni that early results showed Mr. Djohar's ruling coalition had won 21 seats — half of the 42-member chamber. Pro-Djohar supporters were expected to win two more constituencies where polling was delayed because of a shortage of ballot papers. Four opposition groups took 16 seats and polls were not held in three constituencies due to poor organisation. Government sources reached by telephone said opposition leaders on Wednesday urged Mr. Djohar to acquit the polls, saying there were major irregularities in the electoral process.

## 50 suspects held in southern Egypt

ASSIUT (AFP) — Egyptian authorities have arrested 50 Muslim fundamentalists suspected of involvement in clashes between extremists and police in southern Egypt, police said Wednesday. The incidents late Sunday and early Monday left 13 dead. Eight policemen, including a general, four extremists and a passerby, police sources said the suspects in the communities of Dairut, Al Qusayr, Abu Tig and Manafut had planned to launch new attacks against senior police and government officials in the region to mark the new year. Among those arrested since Tuesday is Ahmad Dia, who police said was involved in the attack Sunday night in Assiut, 380 kilometres south of Cairo, that killed the general and four policemen.

## Progress reported in secret Israel-PLO talks in France

PARIS (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met Wednesday for secret talks on border checkpoints amid reports the two sides were developing a plan to share responsibility. A compromise would clear a significant obstacle in the Middle East peace negotiations, possibly hastening an Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank region around Jericho as agreed under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord.

The two delegations made initial contacts late Tuesday after the arrival of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, then convened for a formal session of negotiations at mid-morning Wednesday in a luxury hotel in Versailles, to the West of Paris, Israeli officials said.

The Palestinian delegation was led by Yasser Abed Rabbo.

"I expect that we are in a stage of making progress in the talks with the Palestinians," said Deputy Israeli Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin.

"If it isn't today, it's tomorrow, and if not tomorrow, it's in another week," Mr. Beilin, a leading dove in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party, told Israeli army radio. "I'm convinced that we will find a solution, and I propose that we don't stand here with a stopwatch, and let the negotiations take their course and be completed."

The negotiations were a continuation of weekend talks held in Norway on control of the borders, roads and bridges

linking Israeli-occupied lands with Jordan and Egypt, and on the size of the Jericho enclave. Norwegian officials also were participating in the Paris talks.

Israeli radio reports said Wednesday that negotiators were developing a formula in which border stations would be set up by both Israelis and Palestinians.

Palestinians would be checked at both stations, but Israeli negotiators were insisting Israel be checked only at the Israeli stations, the reports said.

Another snag is over VIP entry. Palestinians want VIPs exempt from Israeli security checks, the reports said. Israel was willing to have a separate VIP entrance but questions persisted over who would be considered a VIP, the reports said.

Word of the compromise was hinted at earlier in Tunis, where Palestinian and diplomatic sources said the PLO and Israel had drawn up a compromise plan to share control of border checkpoints.

Mr. Rabin said Israeli forces will not chase suspected Palestinians into the autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho.

"Hot pursuit will be impossible for the army in the Palestinian regions which are to become autonomous, the Gaza Strip and Jericho, even if Jewish settlements have been attacked from these regions," Mr. Rabin reportedly told parliament's closed door foreign affairs and defence committee on Tuesday.

"I hope that there will be cooperation with the Palesti-

nian police on this question," the Yediot Aharanot newspaper quoted Mr. Rabin as telling the committee.

The comments contradicted what the foreign ministry's legal adviser Yoel Singer told another parliamentary committee last week.

Mr. Singer said the accord did not restrict the army "in time or space" and that troops would be free to enter autonomous areas on security operations.

Mr. Rabin also outlined to the foreign affairs committee that the Palestinian police, which is to maintain order during autonomy, would be equipped with "rifles, machine-guns and a number of armoured vehicles."

Nissim Zvili, a confidant of Mr. Peres, met PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunis Tuesday evening and Wednesday and said they discussed new ideas to break the deadlock.

"There was some progress, but not enough," Mr. Zvili told Reuters.

"There are some new ideas. Maybe they will solve the problem, though the solution is not easy," he added.

He did not elaborate, but said the negotiations going on in France have "analysed the elements of disagreements and are concentrating now on bridges and checkpoints."

"Mr. Arafat told me that he understands the security needs we (Israelis) have, but that we should understand the political and psychological problems of the Palestinian people who

(Continued on page 5)

## Crown Prince urges shift in teaching orientation

IRBID (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday called for a reassessment of Jordan's information programmes and for highlighting the Kingdom's messages in the different fields.

"To highlight Jordan's messages in the social, cultural and health fields is a lot better than showing a special song before the main news at night," the Crown Prince said during a visit to the Jordan

University of Science and Technology (JUST) in Irbid.

Prince Hassan reviewed the international circumstances and the political pressures on Jordan and pointed to the importance of safeguarding democracy and working for the best of the country as pillars of the Jordanian society.

The Crown Prince also tackled educational issues and especially university education and called on

Jordanian universities to upgrade the level of their teaching policies from local and sectarian orientation to national orientation.

He also urged Jordanian universities to avoid absolute scientific policies and link scientific research and studies with the practical and realistic approaches.

Following the meeting with the deans of college at the university, the Crown Prince

visited King Abdullah Hospital, which will be situated within the university campus itself. The total cost of the hospital is estimated at JD 48 million and will have a capacity of 643 beds. It will benefit to around one million people.

The main donors for the project are the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development and the Islamic Bank for Development in Jeddah.

## U.S. reportedly expects Israel-Syria deal in April

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel and Syria will sign a declaration of principles for peace in April, according to a scenario envisaged by the United States, the Haaretz newspaper reported Wednesday.

The Hebrew daily quoted Israeli political sources for the story which stated that the declaration would be similar to the one Israel signed with Jordan on Sept. 14, a day after the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) initiated an autonomy deal in Washington.

The calendar envisaged by the Americans is logical, because the Israeli military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho is to be finished by April 13," the sources told the paper.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad could consider completion of the withdrawal, which failed to start on the Dec. 13 deadline set out in the autonomy agreement, as the launch of an overall peace process, Haaretz said. Syria has strongly criticised the autonomy agreement as a separate deal.

Damascus would explain in detail that it is prepared to make peace with Israel and the Israeli government in return recognise Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights and undertake to withdraw gradually from the plateau seized in the 1967 Middle East war. The sources said Mr. Assad

would announce he was ready to open diplomatic relations with Israel as part of a peace accord when he meets President Bill Clinton in Geneva on Jan. 16.

Bilateral talks between Israel and Syria are scheduled to resume at the end of January in Washington after a five-month break.

Haaretz said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher would embark on a new Middle East tour after the bilateral talks to prepare the declaration of principles.

U.S. reassures Lebanon

The new U.S. ambassador to Lebanon handed the government a letter Wednesday reiterating U.S. commitment to withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country.

The letter from Mr. Christopher handed to Lebanese Foreign Minister Fariz Boney by Ambassador Mark Hambley, expressed Washington's "absolute commitment for a withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon," Beirut radios said.

Mr. Christopher, in Damascus during his recent Middle East tour, said Lebanon and Syria had agreed to attend a 12th round of talks with the Jewish state. Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon, where it has some 35,000 troops.

## Settlers unveil plan to double communities

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Jewish settlers living in the occupied territories unveiled a plan Wednesday to establish shadow enclaves next to 130 existing settlements, hoping to make it harder for Israel's government to withdraw.

Organisers told a news conference that Jewish settlers of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights would be joined by residents of Israel in setting up the new points.

Shmuel Sackett said the Sept. 13 Israel Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deal, giving Palestinians interim self-rule and a police force, was the foundation of a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel's survival.

"If there are 130 settlements now and they are giving the government problems, the way to double the problems and bring the peace process to a complete halt is to double the settlements," said Mr. Sackett, a U.S.-born facsimile dealer who lives in Givat Shimon settlement in the West Bank.

The start of Israel's promised troop withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho has been delayed since Dec. 13 while the sides, meeting in secret outside Paris on Wednesday, struggle over security arrangements.

"We want to stall the negotiations," Mr. Sackett said. "We are for peace but do not accept this peace plan."

Under the settlement campaign named "zu artzeinu" (Hebrew for this is our land), groundbreaking ceremonies will take place on Friday at 130 points near existing settlements. The following Wednesday, the settlers will begin moving into them.

On Tuesday night eight Israeli families moved into a new site on the West Bank, saying they had tired of waiting for government permission to move into houses that had

been standing ready for over a year.

When Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin took office in July 1992, he ordered a freeze on new construction on occupied territories.

Settlers' fears have not been assuaged by government assurances they can remain on the land until the start of a yet-to-be-negotiated permanent solution five years off.

About 10,000 settlers live among some two million Palestinians in the occupied territories.

A newspaper said Monday about 30,000 Israelis would pull out the settlements if they received adequate compensation.

The daily Haaretz said its figures were based on recent opinion polls and numerous interviews with representatives of the settlers.

"Some 30,000 settlers would be ready to leave (the West Bank) and Gaza to relocate elsewhere if they get proper compensation," Haaretz said.

A spokesman for the settlers' council, Aharon domh, said: "There is no doubt that some of the 130,000 Israelis living in the 144 settlements... are prepared to agree to leave with compensation."

"But the vast majority want to stay and many more want to join them."

Mr. Domh dismissed as "marginal" reports that hundreds of houses are up for sale at bargain prices in the occupied territories.

However, Haaretz gave the example of a three-room flat in the West Bank settlement of Guinot Shomron which is worth \$50,000 today against \$70,000 18 months ago.

In the neighbouring colony of Maale Shomron a villa is up for sale at \$110,000, down from \$150,000 before the 1991 elections.



A Jewish settler passes an Israeli soldier checking the site of an attack Wednesday that left two Israelis dead in a Ramallah suburb in the occupied West Bank (AFP photo)

## 2 Israelis killed; Hamas, DFLP claim responsibility

BETUNIYA, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Palestinian hardliners shot and killed two Israelis Wednesday, riding their car with bullets in a drive-by shooting in the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli army said the attack was carried out by the armed underground of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). It took place in the Palestinian village of Beituniya outside Ramallah, 15 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

"They were shot by small arms at close range," it said in a statement.

The attack could complicate Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which have reportedly reached a critical stage in overcoming the last major obstacles delaying the implementation of autonomy in the occupied territories.

It ignited a raucous fight in Israel's parliament, interrupting the debate on the annual budget. Right-wing members accused the government of incompetence for failing to protect citizens and for signing a peace accord with the Palestinians in the first place.

"Again we see that this peace isn't peace. It is costing victims," said Moshe Nissim, a parliament member from the Likud opposition bloc and a

former justice minister.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal responded that the number of attacks was higher before the peace agreement. He blamed the attack on the Izzedine Al Qassam brigades, the armed underground wing of Hamas.

Brigadier Shaul Mofaz, a military commander at the scene, said a leaflet from the group claiming responsibility was found there.

He said either one or two men carried out the shooting. The brigadier said a manhunt was on for men belonging to three or four Hamas cells in the Ramallah area.

The attack came after a 10-day lull in attacks by opponents of the peace process. It follows by days the return of almost 200 Hamas members exiled to the border with Lebanon for over a year.

Jewish settlement spokesman Shai Bazak said the victims were two religious men from the Bnei Brak suburb of Tel Aviv. Both believed to be in their 20s.

Settler leaders called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to cancel the autonomy accord and resign.

The army said a car had been seen waiting at a junction

on a secondary road between Ramallah and Jerusalem and apparently pounced just before noon (1000 GMT), when it saw two men driving along the road. The shot driver lost control and veered off the road, where the tan Renault station wagon was found by United Nations refugee affair officers.

Before speeding off, the attackers scattered leaflets claiming responsibility in the name of Hamas, which has vowed to sabotage the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord, the sources said.

The leaflet said the two were killed to avenge the killing of four Palestinians by Israelis in two attacks.

In Syria, another group opposed to the peace accord, the Damascus-based wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said its fighters in the occupied territories killed the two Israelis.

Hamas also claimed responsibility in a telephone call and faxed message to an international news agency in Jerusalem. In both cases it said the attack was in retaliation for the killing of Hamas commander Imad Akel by Israeli troops on Nov. 24.

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THE LAST TWO DAYS



# Leaked blast details show British case against Libya

LONDON (Agencies) — New evidence showing why Britain believes that Libya was responsible for the vapouring of a U.S. jet over the Scottish border town of Lockerbie five years ago, killing 271 people, emerged Wednesday in details leaked to the Guardian newspaper.

The documents, detailing the British government's case against Tripoli over the bombing of Pan-Am Flight 103 on Dec. 21, 1988, alleged that Libyan intelligence had agents primed a timing device to go off at almost the time the jet exploded.

Washington has demanded that Libya hand over the two Libyans accused of carrying out the attack, and backed by France and Britain obtained tougher U.N. sanctions against Tripoli in a bid to force Libya to hand them over.

The paper said that should the case against the two Libyans ever come to trial, the British government would argue the following points:

— In December 1988, Libya's External Security Organisation (ESO) obtained from a Swiss company, Mebo, a batch of 40 Olympus seven-day capacity timers.

— In 1985, a separate batch of prototype timers, designed for military use but supplied by the same company, was also delivered to the Libyans. One of these timers is believed to have been used to detonate the Lockerbie bombing.

— On Dec. 21, 1988, Libyan intelligence officers allegedly set an Olympus timing device — later returned to the Swiss company — for 1930 on a

Wednesday. The actual explosion occurred at 1903 on Wednesday, Dec. 21.

It is the coincidence of this fact — a timer from one batch apparently tested for use and primed to go off on a Wednesday at near the same time as the timer from another batch actually did go off — that helps explain British and U.S. confidence that Libya was responsible for mounting the operation.

A BBC documentary screened late Tuesday also threw up new details.

Firstly, it cast doubt on part of the prosecution case by quoting Mebo Managing Director Edwin Bollier, as saying that two of the 1985 batch of timers, originally said to have gone only to Libya, had in fact been sold to East Germany.

This raised the possibility that detonator expert Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, which was closely linked to the former East German secret service Stasi, could have been responsible.

But the programme also quoted a senior U.S. official, Gerry Bremer, as saying that after the arrest of a group of his operatives in Germany, Mr. Jibril — contacted by Iran — had handed the bombing over to his allies in Libya.

"Jibril went to the Libyans and said, 'I am in breach of a contract I have with the Iranians. They're going to pay me a big piece of money to attack an American plane,'" Mr. Bremer said.

"It seems to me it was not in

the end Ahmad Jibril who conducted the attack though he had a contract to do it — it was the Libyans who conducted the attack," he added.

## Clinton pledges justice

In Washington, U.S. President Bill Clinton led ceremonies commemorating victims of Flight 103 Tuesday and said the United States would not rest until the case was closed.

The president made the pledge as he broke ground at Arlington national cemetery for a memorial to the 271 victims of the bombing.

He told families and friends of the victims of the bombing: "Our nation will never stop from pursuing justice against those who caused it, for the attack on Pan Am 103 was an attack not only on the individuals of 21 nations who were aboard the aircraft, it was an attack on America."

"Mr. Clinton said the United States remained determined to bring those responsible to justice, declaring 'we will not rest until the case is closed.'"

Flanked by the grave markers of America's military dead, Mr. Clinton broke the ground for the memorial made of 270 stone blocks.

"Each tells the story of a life wrongfully cut short," Mr. Clinton said.

More than 100 families and friends of the Lockerbie victims, assembled on a chilly, breezy day beneath fitful sun to hear Mr. Clinton assert that the memorial would be a "lasting testament to the innocent who died."

# Fadlallah: Syria could help end prisoners deadlock

BEIRUT (R) — The spiritual leader of Lebanon's pro-Iranian group said on Tuesday Syria could play a key role in resolving the issue of Arab prisoners and missing Israeli servicemen.

But Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah rejected a U.S. plea to reveal the fate of six Israeli servicemen missing in Lebanon since the 1980s.

"We reject the American presentation because we reject any dealing with the problem from one side without the other," Sheikh Fadlallah told Reuters at his heavily-guarded house in Beirut.

"We encourage discussion of this issue on condition that it is a balanced one where the Lebanese and Palestinian captives are looked upon in the same way as the Israeli captives."

Asked which party could undertake such a mission, Sheikh Fadlallah said: "If Syria is the one who undertook it then I believe Syria can move in several positions in this respect."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in Damascus earlier this month that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had undertaken to help a U.S. congressional mission seeking information on the missing Israelis.

Sheikh Fadlallah said the U.S. interest in the missing Israelis was "further evidence that America, whether its administration or Congress, thinks only about Israel."

But he said there appeared to be growing U.S. interest in developing relations with Syria.

"America, when looking into the future of its interests in the region, knows that the Syrian role, no matter how much developments weaken it...still has the means to sabotage many situations if it wanted," Sheikh Fadlallah said.

# Iran welcomes Czech Skoda Plzen, denies seeking nuclear link

PRAGUE (Agencies) — Iran's ambassador to Prague issued a statement Tuesday which appeared intended to distance Iran from reports that the country was seeking nuclear technology through the Czech company Skoda Plzen A.S.

Ambassador Rasoul Movahedian, who met Skoda General Director Lubomir Soudek on Tuesday, said he welcomed stronger ties with the Czech heavy engineering company but said the relationship was aimed at peaceful projects only.

"Iran, with putting forward an economically oriented foreign policy, gives priority to friendly and traditional partners who offer to advance reliable technical and economic joint projects," Mr. Movahedian said in the statement issued after the meeting.

"Iran has really no intention to be engaged in non-peaceful efforts, neither by the Czech side nor by any other international side," he said.

The New York Times reported last Friday that the Czech republic had promised to stop a Czech engineering company from exporting nuclear technology to Iran after pressure from unnamed U.S. government officials.

Czech officials have repeatedly denied reports published in Israel, France and the Czech Republic which have quoted Israeli sources as saying that Iran was 'looking to the Czech Republic to supply nuclear components.'

Skoda Plzen officials said last week that Mr. Soudek discussed a possible nuclear power project with Iranian officials during a visit to Tehran in late November, but that no agreement was made.

The company said in a written statement last week that if Iran showed an interest in a contract for a nuclear power plant, "Skoda Plzen would react positively, of course within the framework of Czech laws."

The Czech government requires approval of possible military technology exports by its defence, interior, foreign and trade ministries on a case-by-case basis before granting an export license.

The former state-run conglomerate, now owned by a consortium of Czech banks and investment funds, has extensive experience in building nuclear power equipment as well as divisions which produce everything from conventional weapons to machine tools and locomotives.

Skoda Plzen said it plans to begin two joint ventures in Iran for assembling trolley buses and importing sugar mill equipment. It said it was involved in the construction of seven sugar cane plants worth some 20 billion crowns (\$669 million).

## 'Vast' gas reserves

Iran has discovered "vast" off-shore gas reserves in the Gulf, Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh announced Wednesday.

Mr. Aghazadeh told Tehran Radio the new reserves are of the "same importance" as those at South Pars, in the Gulf north of Qatar, which contains an estimated three trillion cubic metres of gas.

The minister did not give the exact location of the new reserves or its estimated volume, but said more details would soon be provided.

Iran was previously reported to have reserves of some 20 trillion cubic metres of gas — accounting for 15 per cent of the world's total and ranking it second after Russia.

Most of Iran's reserves however remain untapped since the country lacks the means to transport them to consumers.

Tehran has begun technical and commercial studies with a consortium of European companies, led by Gaz de France, to examine a project on exploiting and exporting its gas to Europe.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Theologian appeals for leniency

MECCA (AP) — Saudi Arabia's leading theologian called Tuesday on governments facing a surge in Islamic fundamentalism to be tolerant. Referring to Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz said: "Islam is a religion of tolerance. The rulers should not be harsh or cruel in dealing with the others. Sheikh Ben Baz was addressing the opening session of the Muslim World League's 33rd annual conference. More than 52 scholars from Muslim nations are attending the meeting the league's headquarters in Mecca. Sheikh Ben Baz urged the application of Sharia in Asia and Africa. He also called for wider support for Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia.

## Iran wants to expand Morocco ties

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani told Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Filali on Tuesday that Iran wanted to expand relations with Morocco. "We are happy like you about the expansion of relations...the situation of the Islamic World is such that countries like Iran and Morocco should have greater cooperation," Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying. Iran and Morocco resumed diplomatic ties in 1991 after a 10-year break. Relations were cut after King Hassan of Morocco took in his old friend the Shah of Iran, who had fled the 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. "Whenever there is a rift between Islamic countries it is filled by satanic powers," Tehran Radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying. The Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri as telling Mr. Filali. The minister also met his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati who said Iran put no limit on improvement of ties with Morocco. The radio added Mr. Filali, the most senior Moroccan official to visit Iran since 1979, arrived in Tehran Tuesday.

## Iraq in shambles, says U.S. senator

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Iraqi economy is near collapse as a result of U.N. sanctions, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said Tuesday. Visitors to Iraq told Senator Dennis Deconcini during a visit to the Middle East last week that the country is in shambles and that President Saddam Hussein has reacted by cracking down on suspected opponents. "Sanctions certainly are hurting substantially, even though some things are getting in," Mr. Deconcini said. "It's a real disaster going on there economically." Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak advised Mr. Deconcini not to lift the sanctions, as Baghdad is asking.

## 2 killed, 3 wounded in Yemen shootout

SANAA (AFP) — Gunmen in Yemen shot dead two people, including a policeman, and wounded three others Tuesday in a shootout between security forces and armed car thieves. An Interior Minister spokesman said. Quoted by state television, the spokesman said the incident occurred after the bandits stole two cars on the Sanaa-Hodeida road in the north of the country. The bandits opened fire on the police which launched a massive manhunt with the help of air force helicopters, he said. The Interior Ministry is determined to pursue the criminals and bring them to justice, the spokesman added. Several car thefts have been recorded in Yemen in recent years where carrying arms is tolerated.

## Section of Israeli highway due to cloud

TEL AVIV (AP) — A leak in a chlorine vat owned by the state water company caused a cloud of gas over the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway Tuesday, closing part of the highway and injuring one firefighter, police said. Firemen, police and employees of the Environment Ministry were rushed to the Shaar Hagar intersection near Beit Shimon where 15 kilometres west of Jerusalem. "There was a cloud of chlorine that gave off a very harsh odor...and it was recommended that this area of the highway be closed for the health of the drivers and the residents in the area," said firefighter Shlomo Cohen on Israel Radio. Mr. Cohen said drivers were directed to travel on alternate routes. A firefighter was hospitalised in fair condition suffering from gas inhalation, police said. The section of the highway was closed for about an hour.

## Clinton signs treatment of Gulf soldiers

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton signed legislation to require the Veterans Affairs Department to treat Gulf war veterans for diseases that may have resulted from exposure to toxic substances. "Over the past 2½ years, Gulf veterans have experienced a wide range of health care problems that have eluded diagnosis and cure," Mr. Clinton said in a statement on Tuesday, one day after he signed the bill. He said the veterans' symptoms include fatigue, painful muscles and joints, bleeding gums, skin rashes, short-term memory loss and hair loss. "With this legislation, the V.A. will have the authority to provide to these veterans both inpatient and outpatient care on a priority basis," Mr. Clinton said. "Thus, we can help make certain that these veterans' health care needs are met as fully as possible while important research into their problems goes forward." Possible chemical and biological contamination during the Gulf war has become an issue because of the thousands of veterans suffering from debilitating and undiagnosed illnesses that have come to be known as Gulf syndrome. Oil fire fumes, pesticides and other environmental hazards have been raised as possible causes. The Pentagon says it has been unable to pinpoint a single reason for the illnesses, and has emphasised that there were no known incidents of chemical agent exposures or detections during the war.

## Algiers shaken by mild tremor

ALGIERS (R) — A tremor that measured about 3.0 on the Richter scale rippled through Algiers at 23.05 (22.05 GMT) on Tuesday night, state radio said. The tremor, which shook buildings from the city centre to the suburbs on the hills surrounding the capital, was centred on the southwestern neighbourhood of Bouzareah, the radio said. "The whole house shook," said a man who lives on a hill above the city, adding that the quake did not cause any damage. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

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**PROGRAMME TWO**

17:30	Taratara
19:00	News in French
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:30	News in Arabic
19:30	Family Matters
19:30	Reasonable Doubts
19:30	News in English
19:30	Film "Fighter for Hire"

**PRAYER TIMES**

05:05	Fajr
06:27	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:34	Asr
14:18	Maghreb
18:04	Isha

**CHURCHES**

Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740

Arch of the Annunciation Tel. 623666

Arch of the Annunciation Tel. 623666

Arch of the Annunciation Tel. 623666

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711351

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684193

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991.

**WEATHER**

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Chances of rain will gradually get little and winds will be southerly becoming westerly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers and winds will be northerly moderate.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	8 / 16
Aqaba	11 / 21
Deserts	5 / 18
Jordan Valley	12 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures Am-

**JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER**

min 17.4, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 67 per cent, Aqaba 71 per cent.

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**NIGHT DUTY**

AMMAN:

Dr. Rashed Mazar 794788

Dr. Khalil Al-Jabri 740740

Dr. Mohamed Omran 612252

Dr. Mohammad Lahbachi 603585

Firas pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Naboukh pharmacy 626672

Al Salem pharmacy 636739

Yacoub pharmacy 649445

Shamsi pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IBRD: Dr. Mazen Sharairi 248056

Al Qads pharmacy (-)

Min./Max. temp.

Amman	8 / 16
Aqaba	11 / 21
Deserts	5 / 18
Jordan Valley	12 / 24

**EMERGENCIES**

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192. 621111. 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Police Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdell Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-533200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport. 86-53800

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/4

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 644412

Isabel Amman Maternity 642368

Malles, J. Amman 636140

Palatine, Shmiciani 664174

Shmiciani Hospital 669313

University Hospital 645811

Al-Muasher Hospital 6672719

The Islamic, Abdell 6641646

Al-Mashreq, Abdell 771013

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafli 775111/2

Army, Marika 891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 60224050

Amman Hospital 674155

Zaki Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarga National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)985732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909990

IBRD: (02)275555

020216 Hospital (02)347101

IBn Al Nafies Hospital AQAABA: (03)314111

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

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**HOSPITALS**

**Other Flights (Terminal 2)**

13:00	Riyadh (SU)
16:45	Dubai (EM)
17:25	Rome (AZ)
20:45	Cairo (MS)
22:25	Istanbul (TK)
23:15	Amsterdam (KL)

**DEPARTURES**

**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)**

06:00	Beirut (RJ)
06:30	Agaba (RJ)
11:00	Rome (RJ)
11:00	Amsterdam (RJ)
11:00	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:05	Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:00	Athens (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
13:00	Larnaca (RJ)
13:15	Cairo (RJ)
19:30	Jeddah (RJ)
20:45	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:30	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:05	Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

**Other Flights (Terminal 2)**

05:45	Damascus, Paris (AF)
06:15	Beirut (ME)
14:30	Riyadh (SA)
17:45	Dubai (RJ)
18:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
18:30	London, Berlin (RJ)
19:00	Casa Blanca, Tunis (RJ)
18:35	Athens (RJ)
20:25	Amsterdam (KL)

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Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

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Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

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Banana (Mukammal) 620

Beans 600 / 500

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Carrot 240/160

Cauliflower 200 / 100

Cucumber 230 / 140

Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100

Cucumbers (small) 330 / 200

Eggplant 240 / 70

Garlic 900/600

Grape Fruit 200/100

Leamon 170 / 100

Marrow (large) 160 / 80

Onions (green) 320 / 220

Onions (small) 320 / 220

Oranges 700/500

Onion (dry) 380 / 120

Onion (green) 400 / 300

Pepper (hot) 240 / 180

Pepper (sweet) 260 / 180

Pepper (hot) 260 / 180

Radish 260 / 160

Tomato 40 / 80

Spinach 300 / 150

Spinach 180 / 150



## Jordan, S. Africa establish ties

By Suhair Obeidat  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — South Africans, whose knowledge of Jordan has been limited to information provided mainly by Israel, will be getting a more balanced perspective of the country after the establishment of formal relations between Amman and Pretoria, according to Anthony Greenham, who has been entrusted with setting up a South African diplomatic mission here.

There is much interest in Jordan among South Africans, but in the absence of formal relations, all that we have seen came from Israel's side. Now we hope we can change that and get a more balanced perspective," said Mr. Greenham, the newly appointed charge d'affaires.

South Africa, long isolated from the outside world as a result of the sanctions imposed against it for its apartheid policies, is getting back to the family of nations after it took serious steps to dismantle the discriminatory measures against its black population. Leader of the African National Congress (ANC) Nelson Mandela has recognised the reforms taken by the government in Pretoria and called on the United Nations to lift punitive sanctions taken against South Africa.

Jordan was the first country, in the Arab World, to establish diplomatic ties with South Africa after a series of contacts between the two countries.

The first formal contact took place last March when a delegation of Jordanian businessmen met with President F.W. de Klerk and Foreign Minister P.W. Botha. Khaldun Abu Hassan, chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industries, delivered a message from His Majesty King Hussein to President F.W. de Klerk in which Jordan expressed interest in establishing closer ties with South Africa.

In May, Foreign Minister Botha visited Jordan and met His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and in August, the Crown Prince sent a letter to Mr. Botha suggesting the establishment of a South African commercial office in Amman.

After the South African parliament approved the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) in September, Jordan and South Africa sought the establishment of formal diplomatic relations on the level of ambassadors, which were announced later that month.

Pretoria's new mission here is fully operative and currently works out of temporary headquarters at one of Amman's five star hotels until permanent premises are arranged. An ambassador will be appointed following the April 1994 parliamentary elections in South Africa, according to Mr. Greenham.

The first South African embassy in the Arab World was opened in Bahrain in November, but that "was only a matter of logistics," said Mr. Greenham.

As a result of long years of sanctions against their country, South Africans have developed isolationist attitudes. "Officially we have been cut off from the outside world for quite some time, but self-interests play an important role, and we did everything possible to get around the sanctions and for some time, we kept an economic boom," Mr. Greenham said.

Economic growth then started to slow down and recession hit in 1993. But with the fall of communism, the fear of a Marxist-oriented South African economy has gone, paving the way for positive steps towards a free economy, he said.

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved

good credit lending, which we hope will help our economy to boom," said Mr. Greenham.

On the positive side of sanctions, South Africa developed its own industries, mainly mining, agriculture and arms.

"We have developed very sophisticated mine-sweeping equipment, considered to be the best in the world," he said.

South Africa's mining industry boasts a host of metals and minerals like gold, platinum, manganese, uranium and diamonds. Next month a South African official will visit the Jordanian Potash Company to discuss possibilities of a future joint venture, according to Mr. Greenham.

South Africa's interests in Jordan focus on joint projects of mining and water techniques. Mineral deposits in the Dead Sea and expertise in water technology are fields where Jordan and South Africa can pool their expertise.

The balance of trade between Jordan and South Africa, with an estimated annual worth of \$40 million, has so far been in the latter's favour.

While Jordan imports iron and steel products, it only exports to South Africa "a host of various little things, so we hope to increase this into a balance," Mr. Greenham said.

South Africa's traditional business partners are the United States, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. A disadvantage in wider-scale trade relations is the great geographical distance between the two countries. "But we hope to find a way to make it easier," he said.

As part of confidence-building measures, Jordan and South Africa scrapped visa requirements for both countries' nationals for business and tourism stays of up to 30 days. "We hope to see an increase in travel on both sides," he said.

## Caritas to distribute Italian aid to poor

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Ernesto Oliviero, an Italian philanthropist left Amman Wednesday for home after delivering a plane-load of used clothes, food and medicine to Jordan Caritas to be distributed to the needy Jordanians and Iraqis.

According to Father Mousa Adeli, head of a liaison office for Iraq Caritas the plane carried five tonnes of clothes, one tonne of food supplies and two tonnes of medicines as a gift from the Italian people.

He told the Jordan Times that the Latin patriarchate in Jordan took delivery of the aid noting that Bishop Salim Al Sayegh ordered that half of the relief supplies be distributed to Jordanians and the other half to the Iraqi poor, according to Father Adeli.

Fr. Adeli, who had served as Jordan Caritas director for many years noted that during his mandate he received 15 plane loads of relief supplies from Mr. Oliviero collected by thousands of Italian volunteers from the Italian public.

Most of the voluntary campaigns organised by Jordan Caritas over the past 10 years entailed the distribution of clothes and medicines, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, in Jordan's rural regions, said Father Adeli.

Noting that the 16th plane load was supplied by the Italian Sermig Society, Father Adeli said that Mr. Oliviero had received the Jordanian Peace Medal from His Majesty King Hussein in 1991, following the Gulf war, for his humanitarian services to the poor in Jordan.

The Sermig Society, which groups 600 employees, takes charge of raising contributions with the help of thousands of volunteers in Italy.

He said that last year's plane load of supplies included 35 wheel chairs for the handicapped in Jordan.

Mr. Oliviero said upon his arrival in Amman Tuesday evening, that the latest supplies on board the plane were presented to Jordan which "has been making endeavours towards democracy."

"Jordan is a country, known for its leadership's wise policies and one which played host to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis," said Mr. Oliviero.

Jordan Caritas Director General Nabil Haddad voiced Jordan's appreciation for the continued Italian aid to the Kingdom's poor.

## Writers to get state awards

AMMAN (Petra) — Seven Jordanian writers, researchers and artists are to receive state awards worth between JD 5000 — 10000 each, according to an announcement by culture Minister Amin Mahmoud.

The minister, who announced the names of the winners at a press conference held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman said the awards for outstanding works in 1992 would be formally presented to the winners at a ceremony to be held under the Royal patronage at a later date.

According to Dr. Mahmoud the following citizens deserved the awards as recommended by the special committee:

Dr. Ibrahim Saafin won the literature award for his studies in short stories.

Dr. Kamel Saeed won the award for his work in social sciences.

Artist Muna Abdul Majid Saudi and artist Karim Tumei won the arts award.

Mr. Jamal Abu Hamdan won the award for theatre.

Dr. Saad Hijazi and Dr. Ibrahim Khatib won the award for studies in Jordanian children's growth and development.

The 35 per cent to 50 per

## Government cuts customs duties on pick-up trucks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has decided to slash by up to 50 per cent customs duties on medium-size pick-up trucks with effect from Jan. 1, 1994, Finance Minister Sami Gammo said Wednesday.

In effect, the measures means a reduction of between JD 2,000 and JD 3,000 for Japanese-made pick-ups and between JD 2,500 and JD 4,000 for European and American vehicles, dealers said.

Mr. Gammo said the Council of Ministers had already approved a Ministry of Finance and Customs recommendation for the reduction and that the measure would go into effect as of the new year.

Mr. Gammo said the move was aimed at helping farmers and small industries which use pick-up trucks for transporting raw materials and their products.

"We hope this will make life easier for our farmers and small industries who need small pick-up trucks for their businesses," Mr. Gammo told the Jordan Times. "Our main target is the low-income group."

The 35 per cent to 50 per

cent reduction will be applicable to pick-up trucks of up to four-tonne carrying capacity under a slab system prepared by the customs department.

The minister said there was no consideration of whatsoever of reducing customs duties on passenger cars. He referred to his own earlier comments that the government felt that Jordanian roads are already saturated with small cars, clogging the traffic and consuming imported fuel, which in turn imposes a burden on the treasury.

He has said that the government might also consider reducing customs duties in large passenger vehicles such as buses which serve a larger number of people at cheaper costs than small cars. No decision has been taken in this respect yet.

Mohammad Jamal, director of the Customs Department at the Ministry of Finance, was quoted as saying in local reports that the government was keen to encourage local assembly of automobiles.

He said the government had also decided to reduce customs duties on automobile chassis to

one per cent from the present 25 per cent with effect from Jan. 1.

A local company has already announced plans to assemble cars in Jordan in collaboration with a South Korean company, but it would take several years before the first vehicle leaves the assembly line.

Customs duties on cars in Jordan are among the highest in the region, but that has not done much to decrease the number of cars in the Kingdom. Adding further to the number of cars here were the tens of thousands of vehicles brought in from Kuwait and other Gulf states by expatriates who returned home in the wake of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Despite the 50 per cent slash in customs duties, a pick-up will also remain beyond the reach of an average wage-earner in Jordan.

The cheapest pick-up of acceptable quality costs around JD 11,000; with the reduction in customs the price will come down to around JD 9,000 in the country, where the average monthly earning is around JD 160.

## Abanda says it's time for heavy rain, snow

AMMAN (J.T.) — A bulletin issued Wednesday by the Department of Meteorology noted that rain fell in different areas of Jordan Tuesday noting that the largest amounts of rain fell in Rabbeh near Karak. It said that the area received 23.2 millimetres of rain while in Basira, in the south east, received the least amount of 0.5 millimetre.

The rain coincided with a statement by Ali Abanda, the department director, who said the actual winter season with shorter days and longer nights.

Wednesday marked the beginning of 40 days of usually heavy rains and, possibly, snow, Dr. Abanda told the Jordan Times.

He said that the eastern, desert regions and the southern regions of Jordan, including Aqaba, have had larger amounts of raining the past two months than the central and the northern areas.

Heavy rain fell in Aqaba Monday night and Tuesday morning, accumulating 19.3 millimetres of water; this amount is more than half the annual rate of rainfall that normally falls in Aqaba which receives up to 31 millimetres, said Dr. Abanda.

The Jordan News Agency.

## Adults and Kids Winter Jackets

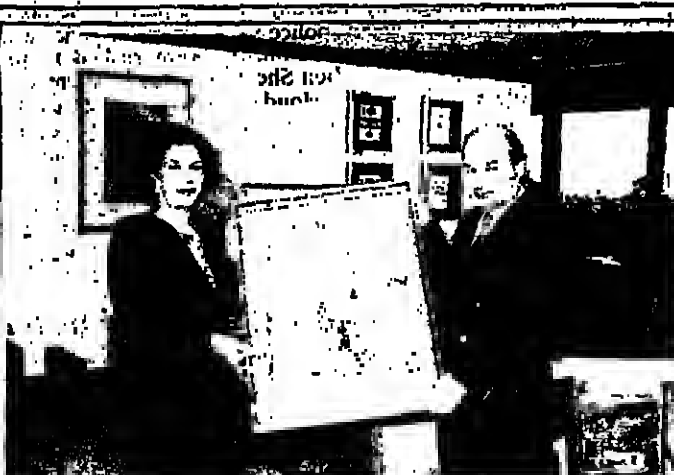


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Our new second floor with varieties of gifts, watches and custom jewellery  
**Location: Sweifieh, Shapsough Centre, next to new "Mill"**



## Art gift to RJ

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Jordanian Society for Fine Arts Wednesday presented Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, with a gift of nine paintings by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries.

The gift, which was presented by the society president Princess Wijdan Ali was in recognition of RJ's efforts towards supporting the Jordanian artistic movement and its contributions towards cultural work in Jordan.

RJ Chief Executive Office Mahmoud Jamal Balqez received the gift which was presented to mark the airline's celebrations of its 30 year anniversary.

Mr. Balqez thanked the princess for the valuable gift noting that the generous act would serve as an incentive for RJ's continued backing for culture and art activities in Jordan. The photograph shows Mr. Balqez receiving one of the paintings from Princess Wijdan Ali.

## Child shoots himself

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 12-year-old boy who shot himself accidentally while playing with his father's gun, died Tuesday in Queen Alia Military Hospital, according to a police report.

The victim's mother told police she was in the house when she heard gunshots coming from her son's room.

The mother said she went to see what happened to her son and she found him lying on the floor bleeding. Hospital sources said the victim identified only as J.A.D., was declared dead on arrival as a result of gun wounds to the head.

Police said they have seized the weapon and are investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, Zarqa police are searching for an unidentified assailant who reportedly shot a 10-year-old girl who was standing in the front-yard of their house Tuesday.

The girl was taken to Zarqa Hospital and is reported in good condition.

Police are conducting investigations to identify the assailant.

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### 'New' approach to 'old' tax

**FINANCE MINISTER** Sami Gammoh did the right thing when he engaged the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in a dialogue about the proposed new sales tax. This kind of communication and consultation should be the mainstay of all governmental initiatives, over and above the regular links and channels with parliament.

Mr. Gammoh kept the door wide open for additional discussions with the private sector about the implications of the tax on Jordanian industry and business when he told his audience Tuesday that it was not too late for introducing amendments to the legislation. Even though the new sales levy would replace the already-in-place consumption tax, the ramifications of the new measure nevertheless needs a thorough reconsideration in consultation with the representatives of our business community. It is not enough to brush off the accusation that the new tax was introduced as a result of pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Minister of Finance rejected this allegation outright although other knowledgeable people within and from outside the government insist that the additional tax is part and parcel of a standby agreement with the IMF.

The crux of the problem is whether the new levy would inhibit the growth of Jordanian business opportunities and decrease protection for the country's infant industry. If it turned out to be true, for example, that the effects of the tax would benefit imported products, then we have a legitimate cause for alarm and concern. This country cannot afford to be a net importer for the rest of its life. Industrialisation on our part, on the other hand, is a process that requires guidance, support and reasonable protection since the starting point is always difficult.

This is not to mention the political fallout from any precipitous move to make life in the country harder economically. If Jordanian industries lose some of the local market to foreign competitors as a result of the tax, this would be at the expense of labour which is already at a critical stage.

Yet the Minister of Finance is on the right track by soliciting views and counsel from the private sector. As long as this process of give and take continues there will always be real hope for a proper resolution of all the issues related to the new tax. Since the new legislation will not be submitted to Parliament for adoption till the process of reconsideration is completed, there is every reason to believe that happy compromise can still be found, hopefully soon.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to increase salaries of civil servants and military personnel as well as pensioners is bound to help employees fulfill a long-cherished desire for improved living conditions, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday. The income of employees as well as the pensioners has been eroded due to the high prices of various commodities, said the paper which added that increases would help stability because it would encourage employees to double their efforts in serving the nation through increased production. Dr. Majali's statement Tuesday reflected the government's plans to address basic issues which, among other things, include provision for subsidies for basic commodities, prices for the benefit of the low-income groups in Jordan, added the daily. It said that the premier's decision to work out a plan for a health scheme for all Jordanians reflected the government's concern with reducing the burden of the poor families who are no more able to cope with the cost of medical services on their own. Addressing these vital issues is bound to accomplish a major achievement for which the present government will take credit, the paper continued. Furthermore, the government's plans to do justice to the judiciary in view of the judges' serious and sensitive responsibility constitutes a very constructive step designed to strengthen the independence of the judicial authority in the Kingdom and its integrity, added the paper. Indeed, said the paper, these plans represent another achievement for the government which has been shouldering a responsible role in building up the country through democracy, despite the difficult situation and the financial burdens it is facing at present.

BY DECLARING their adherence to Israel's conditions for a settlement of the PLO-Israel differences over the implementation of the Oslo deal, Israeli leaders have condemned the negotiations to total failure, said Sawt Al Shaab daily. The paper said that after the Oslo meetings in the past two days, the two sides are starting negotiations anew in the French capital, but there can be no hope for an end to differences as long as Israel holds on to its intransigent position. Both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres have been declaring Israel's adamant position, never relenting on the question of controlling the bridges and the borders separating the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip from Jordan and Egypt, said the paper. Noting that both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres are working towards aborting the Gaza-Jericho first agreement, the paper said that such an adamant stand is a time bomb that threatens the whole Middle East peace process, and proves that the Israeli leaders are afraid of the idea of a comprehensive peace with the Arab states.

## Road accidents and road ethics in a cultural context

By Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

WHENEVER a road accident occurs, involving either vehicles or pedestrians, traffic officials seize the opportunity to remind us, time and again, of what they consider the major "causes" of traffic accidents: a) failure to obey road signs, especially with respect to speed and overtaking; b) bad road conditions, particularly in winter time; and c) the condition of the vehicle itself.

Undeniably, these are all factors which contribute significantly to the trauma we have been (and still are) experiencing since the introduction of vehicles (whose number has and is dramatically increasing) into our lives and since the abrupt and unexpected increase of the inhabitants of our towns and cities themselves. In my opinion, however, these factors are not the real causes.

The causes lie deeper, in our "public character and in our present culture. The problem, as I see it, is essentially a problem of misguided upbringing and bad education. In this larger context, I wish to raise the following three points.

First, people in our society generally belittle danger. Knowingly or not (often unwittingly), they overlook the risks involved in many of the actions or moves they make, especially those which do not appear to be visibly risky or dangerous. This is true when they swim in the muddy waters of the Kingdom's dams and drown, when they work in the midst of all kinds of poisonous fumes in factories and repair shops without bothering to wear a mask, when they prepare sandwiches in restaurants without putting on sanitary gloves, when parents see their kids wading in sewerage water and do not care, when school boys play soccer without wearing the right shoes, when butchers hang meat outside for flies to feast on, when businessmen erect huge commercial centres without proper fire-escape doors or stairs, etc.

Our relation to the road, be we motorists or pedestrians, is based on the same principle: carelessness, recklessness, ignorance, haphazardness. Call it whatever you wish, it all boils down to underestimation of danger. How many people wear a vest or a helmet when they ride a bicycle? How many (and I am talking about adults, not children here) look left and right when they cross the street? They see your car, and they turn their faces the other way. Drivers, similarly, are no better than the pedestrians. They see you crossing the street and they come dashing at you, trying to pass before you cross. Where do most children play soccer or volleyball? In the streets. Do you think they are truly aware of danger? Worse, do you think their parents realise the potential risks of such recklessness?

Secondly, there is either an obvious indifference to or a deliberate disrespect of what we may call public space in our society, including the roads. Whatever we learn at home, at school, and at other educational establishments remains, in most cases, restricted to or confined within the home, school, and establishment territory. The moment we are outside the

realm of these three institutions, we seem to feel free to do whatever we feel like. We destroy public property (how many functioning public phones do we have in the country?), throw garbage in the streets, and trash our outing sites.

I have heard the following remark from many foreign visitors and friends. We are amazed, they say, at how courteous, polite, and generous Arabs are in their homes. When you come to the door-step, they say, "after you"; when the tea or coffee is served, they help themselves after you do; when they eat, they serve you first; when you rise to wash your hands, they wash theirs after you do, etc. But when they are in the street, especially when they are behind the wheel, their personality changes 180 degrees. They seem to want to do everything before everybody else does.

Unfortunately, such characterisation is both perceptive and correct. The Arab of today, in his public (not private) life is selfish, disorderly, and even rude. He suffers from both a double-standard complex and a form of schizophrenia. Take our university students in the lecture room. On the whole, they are truly well-behaved, attentive, disciplined, amiable, and at times even shy. You look at them, and you see angels. Try, however, to drive on campus, which incidentally, has wide sidewalks and perfect road signs: you will be shocked by how rude, undisciplined, and reckless these "angels" become outside the classroom.

The point here is there are hardly any street, road, or public space ethics.

Thirdly, and most importantly, our education (this also applies to our upbringing) is mainly rhetorical and theoretical, not empirical or practical. Without a doubt, our parents and teachers "tell" us a great deal. They inform us not to speed when we drive and to pay attention when we cross the street. In fact, they give numerous similar lectures daily: "Thou shalt not...". But telling is not real education, nor is it real upbringing. Effective education and upbringing are those which implant, instill, and foster not information but values and morals inside one's character. The parents or teachers will do better (much better) if they take us to the street and show us how to cross — once, twice, three times — until crossing properly becomes a habit or second nature. They will do better also, if they teach us by example, i.e., if they apply what they themselves preach. To create a sense of responsibility in our kids and students, we ourselves have to be responsible.

The solution is already implied in our discussion of the problem. Let us (parents and teachers, primarily) live up to our society's expectations of us and to the challenges of our mission or calling. Let us take the time, the effort, and the pain (even) to educate not to preach, to demonstrate effectively not to theorise, to instill values and build character not fill the heads of our young people with abstract, meaningless lore.

Road ethics are part and parcel of our moral character. Their absence is, in my opinion, the major cause of accidents.

## Peace with a phantom

By Fawaz Turki

SINCE THE signing of the deal with the PLO, it has pitted almost unopposedly that Israel, in effect, signed a peace agreement with a phantom organisation, because the PLO, in every sense of the word, no longer exists.

There was a time, of course, when the PLO not only existed but legitimately represented the aspirations of the Palestinian people. This legitimacy derived from three sources: the power the PLO's armed fighters and militias projected, the ubiquity of its popular institutions and the genuine support that almost every segment of Palestinians society extended to it.

But the military forces were dismantled and expelled from Beirut in 1982 and later dispersed to such faraway places as Yemen, Algeria and Sudan. Over the years, large numbers of these combatants have resettled elsewhere, mostly in the Gulf countries, where they have found gainful employment, or in their original Arab host states, where they have rejoined their families.

The various social and political institutions that the PLO operated for many years also have collapsed. Institutions such as the Palestine Red Crescent, the Samed Society, the Souk Al Gharb Foundation, the Palestine Research Centre and the Palestine National Fund had offered such things as health care, employment opportunities, educational facilities, academic grants and social services to hundreds of thousands of grateful Palestinians, both in exile and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

And political institutions — for the most part democratic — had made it possible for Palestinians of all stripes to have their voices heard without having their heads cracked, as often happens in the repressive and patriarchal societies of the Arab World. Then, of course, there was the Palestine National Council, the parliament-in-exile and ultimate Palestinian political institution, whose many sessions since 1965 had brought together a representative sampling of the various stratifications of class, ideological currents and political sensibilities that existed in Palestinian society.

All of these institutions closed down soon after the conclusion of the Gulf war, when the PLO began, very simply to go broke. Denied access to financial aid from the oil-rich Arab states — including the taxes levied on Palestinian "expatriate workers there — the PLO could no longer meet its obligations to these groups, which soon atrophied and ceased to function.

Finally, there is the erosion of popular support for the PLO among the mainstream, an erosion tied to the sneaking suspicion of Palestinians everywhere that over the years, their leadership has lost touch with the realities of Palestinian life.

The "clash of civilisations," the next world conflict predicted by Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard, resonates with the thrill of a horror movie, offering new disasters, new enemies to chase away the boredom that Francis Fukuyama foresaw with the arrival of the "end of history."

When President Jiang Zemin of China lectures President Bill Clinton on the arrogance of western insistence that human rights are universal, many are prepared to wonder again what they mean by progress. But this comes just when more and more people in traditional societies are asking why they can't break the cycles of suffering, the ageless rhythms of oppression.

The film "Farewell My Concubine," made in China and then banned there, is an anguished cry at the discovery that even the most dramatic, rapid upheavals only perpetuate the pain when the old

point to how Arafat and his few loyalists have, in effect, drafted a peace agreement behind the backs of their people and signed it on the White House lawn without consulting or convening the Palestinian National Council. The exile community, 4 million strong, feels betrayed.

Other Palestinians, especially those whose husbands, sons or fathers had given their lives for the cause and had been dependent for a living on their social security checks from the PLO, have been pauperised. Palestinian democrats feel enraged at seeing their ideas thrown out the window by a few posturing officials and a vaudevillian Arafat.

Alas, the PLO, or those remnants of it sitting around Tunis today, will soon ensconce themselves in the West Bank and Gaza and continue to call themselves the "sole, official representative of the Palestinian people."

But I am convinced that no one there will listen to them. A new generation of Palestinians, all in their twenties and early thirties, all cut from the same quarry of shared struggle and kinship of vision, will surely come forward and tell these self-styled "sole, official representatives" to move on.

The writer is author of *Exile's Return: The Making of a Palestinian-American*, to be published in January. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

## Zhirinovsky's success could have ripple effect on the Third World

By G.H. Jansen

The countries of the Third World, and especially the Arabs, should be pleased that the "Liberal Democratic Party" of Vladimir Zhirinovsky did well in the recent parliamentary elections in Russia. Or should they?

To judge by the scorn and criticisms and downright abuse now being heaped on him, with remarkable unanimity, by the western media, the Third World should avoid him like the plague which could be one of the objectives of this campaign. According to the western media, he is a Hitler, a racist, a fascist, a Russian imperialist, a clown, a buffoon and an agent of the KGB, the Russian secret police. How else, it is asked, could he have learnt Turkish and three other foreign languages (English, French and German)? The western media usually forgets to mention that he holds two degrees from Moscow university, one of them in law. But in the world that is under the influence of the western media Mr. Zhirinovsky has already been demonised.

The reason why the Arabs, in particular, should be happy about the emergence of someone like Mr. Zhirinovsky is that at least on one very debatable issue, the confrontation between the U.S.-led coalition and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Mr. Zhirinovsky saw Iraq's point of view to the extent of making statements in support of Saddam Hussein. Moreover, when the fighting started, he recruited volunteers to go and fight in Iraq and sent them to Baghdad by plane. It was, perhaps, a little and even a foolish gesture which came to nothing, but at least it showed that Mr. Zhirinovsky could and did take an independent stand even against the pro-U.S. stance of his own government. In U.S. eyes, to support the Iraqi enemy with whom America had been at war is unforgivable.

Apart from this episode, the reason why the West dislikes Mr. Zhirinovsky so comprehensively is not, of course, because he is a Hitler, a racist, etc., but for much larger political reasons. Thus, he is a critic of and a competitor to Boris Yeltsin and the West is very happy with dear Boris, who knows his Russia's place, which is one respectful step behind the United States. This is a position personified by the present Russian foreign minister, the all-too-compliant Mr. Kozirev, who Mr. Zhirinovsky says should be dismissed.

Mr. Zhirinovsky is not prepared to accept that subordination as Russia's place because, as he says quite openly and repeatedly, he wants to restore the national pride of Russia, to "get Russia off its knees." And the practical consequences of that attitude and policy could be dangerous and very uncomfortable for the West, which western commentators have clearly defined: "Zhirinovsky's Russia would be much less cooperative than Yeltsin's with the West in the U.N." To get "Russia off its knees" is a dangerously subversive doctrine. Subversive of the present international

order which is based on the belief that Russia is on its knees, will remain so for some time to come, and that if it shows any signs of getting off its knees should be pushed back down again. Which is what Mr. Zhirinovsky wants to challenge and change.

In other words, if Mr. Zhirinovsky's personality and the presence of his large party in parliament influences Russia's policy under Mr. Yeltsin — and it would be difficult to see how he could not be so influenced — then the international scene would move from being what it is at present, a unipolar world dominated by the one world power with its new world order, and it would become much more bipolar.

Such a situation would obviously be to the advantage of Third World countries, or at least to those of them who wish to get out from under the monopoly domination of one superpower.

The West used to say, and may well say again, that the Third World wants to be able to "play off" one superpower against the other. But in fact no Third World country has ever been able to do playing-off, not even the largest of them, like India, and China, because they did not have the politico-economic weight to do so.

What the bipolar system, the cold war in other words, had to offer the Third World was space, space for manoeuvre and for choice; it gave Third World countries some place else to go. And once a superpower and the Third World countries know that these countries have an alternative place from which to get friendship and support, and perhaps money and weapons, then both the superpower and the other countries behave very differently: the superpower is less dominating and less arrogant and the other countries are less subservient.

But should Third World countries be happy at the emergence of the Zhirinovsky phenomenon, considering that some of his views are deplorable? Since the accusations against the man are propagandistic, they should be looked at carefully. Thus, the charge of anti-Semitism, that is of anti-Jewish feeling, comes down to his questioning why members of the small Jewish minority in Russia should be so prominent and have so much influence in the media. But the same point could be made and has been made about the media in many countries and to point to that fact is not to be anti-Jewish. The plain fact is that the label "anti-Semitic" has been made so shameful that it has become a simple term of abuse, like "fascist."

Third World countries, after all, are not called upon to approve or endorse all the various strains in the policy of someone like Mr. Zhirinovsky; he will be a continuing benefit to other countries not by holding this view or the other, but by existing, by simply being there as an independent alternative to the one world power. Thus, Third World countries should not be deterred from making this an advantage just because of personal abuse in the western media.

## The depressed West needs a social philosopher

By Flora Lewis

PARIS — The depression in western societies has become much more than economic. There is a Spenglerian sense of cultural decline, of a loss of capacity to keep countries going in the way we expect of them. Only a few years after the collapse of communism brought such a feeling of historic vindication, both optimism and self-confidence have melted away.

The West, like the East, is now facing the colossal bill left by the cold war, which includes moral and psychological questions about the assumptions on which free societies are based.

The drug culture, crime, the dissolution of family structure, a bleak sense of futurity before life's challenges have been accumulating for a long time. But now all these failings are seen as adding up to a crisis that puts the backbone of western civilisation in doubt.

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When President Jiang Zemin of China lectures President Bill Clinton on the arrogance of western insistence that human rights are universal, many are prepared to wonder again what they mean by progress. But this comes just when more and more people in traditional societies are asking why they can't break the cycles of suffering, the ageless rhythms of oppression.

The film "Farewell My Concubine," made in China and then banned there, is an anguished cry at the discovery that even the most dramatic, rapid upheavals only perpetuate the pain when the old

methods of oppressive hierarchy are unchanged.

A film for French television based on the book "The South Slope of Liberty," written by two Egyptian intellectuals who use the pseudonym Mahmoud Hussein, identifies recognition of the individual as the key to freedom.

They understand the comforts of the traditional all-embracing community and how much it hurts to accept individual responsibility, self-reliance, the need for personal initiative. But they argue that this is the only way to emerge from the misery to which so many have so long been condemned to resign themselves.

This is not a clash of civilisations. It is a convergence demanding a reconciliation before the old dilemma of individual and community.

Man is a social animal and cannot face the travail of life and the indifference of nature without support from his kind.

## Tender for purchase of Cows Cooperative Society for Cattle Breeders /ZARQA

The Cooperative Society for the cattle breeders in Zarqa announces the tender to buy 1,450 pregnant heifers to produce milk provided its origin is from a single country of Holstein Frisian kind (black and white) in accordance with the conditions and specifications mentioned in the tender. Payment will be in cash through a confirmed and irrevocable letter of credit.

Interested people can visit the society's offices to obtain a copy of the tender for non-refundable 200 Jordanian dinars. the deadline for accepting tenders is on January 6, 1994.

N.B.: Advertisement fees should be borne by whoever wins the tender.

Address: Zarqa/ Old Zarqa-Amman Street  
near Royal Jordanian Offices.

Tel: 986521, Fax: 900315

Management Committee Secretary  
Ahmad Al Haj Omar

مركز صناعته



## Jordan's art world undergoes metamorphosis

By Mohammad Masharga

There is quite a difference between the timid steps for the creation of a permanent gallery to display the country's art works — spearheaded by Nuha Batshon who created what came to be known as The Gallery in the early 1970s — and the 16 galleries existing in Jordan at present.

Over the past 20 years, Jordan has witnessed a real cultural, artistic and construction development and saw the establishment of several universities and colleges which continue to turn out graduates.

With the return of thousands of expatriates and the socio-economic changes in the country over the past two decades, social and aesthetic values have changed with the result that we now have a unique mixture of cultures. In this climate modern and contemporary values have not prevailed but rather intermixed and interacted with the old values.

This character has had its influence on the Jordanian plastic arts, giving it a rather special nature and determined the course of marketing the paintings in galleries where they are displayed.

The last three years have witnessed the emergence of a large number of private and commercial galleries but some artists still believe that they have not contributed anything towards improving the quality of artistic work or helping to spread the artistic culture in Jordan.

Nuha Batshon, owner of The Gallery located at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel, who continually follows up on the development of the plastic arts movement considers that the large number of galleries should be essentially linked to the concept of improving production.

She doubts that the current competition among the professional artists has contributed to the emergence of creative artists, especially in the light of the meagre financial resources at their disposal.

She pointed out that the decline in the price of paintings over the past two years resulted in a situation where artists became unable to cover the basic costs for their exhibitions.

Furthermore, the flood of a great number of Iraqi artists and the exhibitions which they held in Amman have adversely affected the quality of artwork on the

one hand, but at the same time led to unfair competition in terms of quality and prices. The great number of galleries also caused a congestion in the number of exhibitions which normally open simultaneously. For instance in one month 20 exhibitions were held in Amman preventing art lovers from visiting all the exhibitions in town. According to Batshon the great number of galleries has not encouraged artists to specialise in certain types of arts neither did it help to develop the work of one group of artists or contribute towards the establishment of special types of schools of art.

Samia Al Zaru, owner of a non-profit Open Art Studio agrees with Batshon in her assessment of the art situation in Jordan. Zaru says that the great number of galleries is something unusual and has in no way contributed to the development of the Jordanian plastic art movement.

Noting that a number of non-artists and intruders on the world of art have entered this field, Zaru says that these newcomers have been trying to impose their taste in art and their own concept of shallow artistic culture through exhibitions.

### AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

Like Batshon, Zaru maintains that the wave of Iraqi artists invading Jordan's world of art has had its positive effect only at the beginning on the quality of art, because their presence represented a challenge to the Jordanian plastic art. But at a later stage, and in view of the flood of Iraqi artists in Jordan, especially in the past year, such presence was no more beneficial to the art world in Jordan.

Zaru says she believes that the great number of galleries mushrooming in the country is an expression of the growing need of the local community for art work, noting that professional artists are on the increase largely due to the increase in the number of graduates of art schools.

Suad Hourani, owner of the Baladna Gallery, and Hassan Darwish, director of the Alia Art Gallery, hold different views from those of Batshon and Zaru.

They believe that the increase in the number of galleries has contributed towards the progress of the plastic art movement.

No longer are the Jordanian artists restricted to certain tastes. They are now able to display different works of art.

Furthermore, they say the plastic artists in the past two years have faced a strong competition that whetted their tastes and encouraged them to produce good quality art in form and in essence.

The influence of Iraqi artists has not been a great one to encourage the creation of Galleries and has not affected prices of art work and paintings. And indeed from the Baladna Gallery's experiences, the Syrian artists' work displayed there attracted more public interest, Hourani and Darwish added.

Darwish, a Jordanian artist, says the great number of exhibitions by Iraqi artists has led to the upgrading of the level of taste in the arts in general, particularly in view of the variety of schools of art which they represent.

"I consider their presence as a gain for the Jordanian art movement," said Darwish. Noting that the Iraq art has deep traditions and is considered the best in the Arab region.

According to Noel Favreliere, the director of the French Cultural Centre in Amman, the presence of a great number of non-Jordanian Arab art artists in Amman has contributed to the stimulation of the plastic art movement and offered hitherto unknown ideas in art work, exactly similar to a situation that resulted from the migration of world known artists like Pablo Picasso from Spain and the Russian artist Marc Chagal to Paris. These artists have brought with them new ideas in art which enriched the art movement in France, noted Favreliere.

Another phenomenon which Favreliere referred to was the emergence of a new class of artists from the middle class including professionals and teachers and small businessmen. He said that this class represents the best group of art lovers taking the place of the very rich class of the 1980s.

Owners and managers of galleries and artists are in agreement that the past few years have witnessed a sharp and growing interest in the purchase of works of

art, noting that this was partly due to the fact that the wealthy class in Jordan have been giving due attention to luxurious homes and choosing artists to carry out their internal designs based on imported ideas.

Batshon says that the involvement of internal design and decor in the construction of modern homes has opened the door for the wealthy class to buy more art works and paintings with the view to beautifying their residence to give their homes a social and cultural character reflecting the taste of the owners.

Artist Adnan Al Sharif of the Plastic Arts Association said that some galleries have been specialising in the display of small-size paintings, a move that enabled limited-income groups among the Jordanian society to purchase the work at reasonable prices.

He said that indeed his three last exhibitions of small size paintings were among his more successful works in terms of sale.

But he noted that plastic art continues to draw most of profits from a limited group of rich people in Jordan.

"One can still hear the new class of rich people boasting of the large sums they had paid for obtaining their paintings," according to Zaru who noted that such development has contributed to the development of plastic art.

In order to encourage continued sale of paintings, Batshon suggested that galleries come to an understanding with the artists to reduce the price of their paintings so that intellectuals and art lovers of various classes can buy them.

Jordan still lacks proper plastic art critics, who have failed to appear despite the increase in the number of galleries and their exhibitions.

Indeed art critics in advanced nations have helped to highlight art work and contributed towards raising the price of paintings.

Zaru says that art criticism has failed to contribute towards rectifying the course of the arts movement and it is regrettable that ax-men now dominate the art movement in Jordan despite the fact that they know nothing about art criticism and its rules. Artists say that the country now boast 16 galleries and 60 plastic artists. They note that the last painting that has been displayed was valued at JD 60,000 and painted by an artist of Polish origin.

By Didier Fauqueux  
Agence France Presse

## Christmas in Japan — a night of romantic encounters

TOKYO — Young lovers in Japan, a country of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, like to celebrate Christmas with a night of amorous exchanges in luxury hotels. For "young men and women," to be without a partner at Christmas, which lacks religious significance here but is highly exploited commercially, is a loss of face, and a special night to prepare for months ahead. Tokyo's big hotels, particularly those near Tokyo Bay and the Disneyland theme park 30 minutes

drive from the city centre, are booked out for the period from September. The "lovers Christmas" theme, launched five years ago at the height of Japan's consumer-spending boom, has weathered the battering of recession and the tendency now of Japanese to think twice before laying out cash on anything superfluous.

A young man who invites a girl to celebrate Christmas with him will spend as much as 100,000 yen (\$900) on a hotel room, good dinner and a gift. But, according to the magazine Spirit, the "present" or gift, has become more modest — costing perhaps 25,000 yen (\$230) rather than the 48,000 yen (\$440) typical in 1991.

At the Tokyo Bay Hilton, which has catered for years to young Christmas lovers, there is no evidence of recession in its premium room price range between 32,000 and 44,000 yen (\$290 to \$400) a night. "This year, as last, our hotel has been fully-booked since September for the Christmas celebration," said hotel spokesman Koji Yamasaki.

"We haven't suffered in the recession because our clientele is not a business one. Guests come here for a view of the bay and to be near Disneyland," Mr. Yamasaki said. Young Japanese, most of whom live with their parents until they marry, have to come up with pretexts for spending Christmas away

from home. It would be unthinkable for them to declare their real intentions. "Fortunately, I always manage to find a friend who is prepared to say I spent the night at her place," said Michiko, 27, who will be celebrating her third Christmas love tryst. For restaurateurs, the Christmas-for-lovers is also a boon. They outstrip each other with ideas to attract customers with festive menus, often French cuisine with price going as high as 35,000 yen (\$320) per person, knowing that a young lovebird will be ready to impress his girl.

## Child addicts on the rise in Bombay

By Madhu Naiman  
Agence France Presse  
BOMBAY — Anil Pawar collects trash from the streets of Bombay and sells it to scrap dealers to support his glue-sniffing habit. A typical day for the scrawny 12-year-old begins at dawn when Anil and three other boys who live with him under a shop awning set out with large gunny sacks slung over their shoulders.

survey of abusers of non-narcotic drugs in this city of 12 million for the Home Department of Maharashtra state, of which Bombay is the capital. The centre estimated that there were at least 24,000 cough syrup addicts of all ages in Bombay, 17,000 sleeping tablet abusers and 600 petrol-sniffers in addition to glue-sniffers and heroin addicts.

Glue and petrol-sniffing were the most prevalent among pavement dwellers. Dr. Merchant said, "although even on the pavement you can find about 10,000 heroin addicts." Dr. Merchant said the prohibitive cost of heroin and other narcotics and tough anti-drug laws were pushing pavement addicts to other, cheaper substances. "There are no laws against glue or petrol sniffing," he added. "But you land in jail if you are caught with brown sugar." "The kids are now scared of smack," he said, "and much of the heroin found on the streets here is of very low quality."

"Glue, on the other hand, is easily available, a can costs 10 rupees. All you have to do is lift the lid slightly and sniff the fumes." Dr. Merchant said children usually begin with one can of glue a day and continue at that level for about three months.

They are up to three cans a day in less than a year, he said, and "by this time the child's immunity has fallen sharply because the nutrition level is very low and they fall prey to a host of illnesses."

Dr. Merchant said most trash-recycling pavement children are hooked on some substance by the age of 10. "Most of them have been lured by the bright lights of Bombay or are from problem homes," he said. "Drugs are the easiest escape from the harsh reality of pavement life."

He said most of the child addicts were boys. "But there is a growing number of girls, almost all of them former child prostitutes who were thrown out on the street when they were no longer useful."

DAIRRC recently did a

## Time begins on windswept, isolated islands

By Michael Field  
Agence France Presse  
WELLINGTON — When the new century rolls around in seven years residents of a lonely, windswept group of islands east of here will see the new millennium 45 minutes before anybody else on the planet. For the 750 bardy inhabitants of the Chatham Islands the edge is nothing new. Thanks to a big kink in the international dateline, every day, week and year always dawns first in their skies.

Three tourist accommodation facilities in the Chatham's town of Waitangi report interest from around the world for bookings on the evening of December 31, 1999 in anticipation of the dawn of 2000. On Dec. 31, 1989 a Japanese television network set up a camera on the Chathams to catch live for Tokyo audiences the first sun rays of the 1990s. Fortunately, they taped the sunrise the previous day — because the first day of 1990 arrived with heavy rain.

The Chathams, 860 kilometres (506 miles) east of Christchurch, are two islands — the bigger Chatham Island and the smaller Pitt Island — totalling 963 square kilometres (385 square miles). Their position of 176 de-

grees west puts them on the wrong side of the dateline to New Zealand — but when the line was drawn it was kinked north of Fiji and does not come back into the 180 degree longitude until south of the Chathams. In strict geographical terms Tonga, five degrees over 180 degrees, is closer to the new day but it does not put its clocks forward in summer and stays 13 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time all year round. The Chathams in summer are 13 hours 45 minutes ahead of GMT and as the New Year comes at the height of summer in the southern hemisphere, a Chatham islanders have al-

ways been first. For the folk of the Chathams, mainly fishermen, it's something of a joke: "Put your watches ahead 45 minutes and your minds back 50 years," is a frequently-heard line. There are other oddities, as the bimonthly New Zealand Geographic Journal notes in its latest issue: The Chathams have more fax machines per head of population than anywhere else and also have the world's greatest concentration of Harley-Davidson motorcycles — with off-road tyres, of course. For New Zealanders, the Chathams are a strangely vital if unvisited part of the

national psyche. National weather forecasts always end with predictions for the Chathams and, as they are 44 degrees south, the outlook is usually for high winds and rain. The islands are also renowned for their bird and marine life — notably the delicate Chatham Islands robin that in the mid 70s was the world's most endangered bird. But as the result of an effort that gripped the national imagination the species is now thriving. There is also a dark, bloody past on the Chathams, the near total genocide of the indigenous inhabitants, the Moriori.

A Maori tribe using a brig from New Zealand invaded the islands in 1835 and killed off hundreds of Moriori, also a Polynesian race, and enslaved the survivors. By 1889 there were only 29 Moriori left, down from around 2,000. New Zealand eulogised the "last" Moriori in 1933 but there are many today on the Chathams who call themselves Moriori and their culture is being revived.

"Standing alone against mercurial elements," Geographic says, "The Chatham Islands is the only land between New Zealand and Chile. Remoteness breeds self-reliance and a gritty comradeship."

## Strict new law drives abortion underground in Poland

By Susanne Hoell  
Reuters

WARSAW — Nearly a year after Poland passed a strict new abortion law, many of the fears voiced at the time by liberal politicians, women's groups and ordinary people have come true.

The law, approved after the Roman Catholic Church backed moves to reverse 1956 Communist legislation, has driven abortion underground and added a dimension to the country's secret economy.

Pro-abortion activists say hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Polish women use private agencies which arrange abortion trips abroad or seek help from doctors at home who are known to terminate pregnancies.

"Women travel to the Russian region of Kaliningrad, to Slovakia, to the Netherlands or to Spain. But you can also do it in Poland — illegally of course," says Jolanta Plak-

wicz of the Polish Feminist Association (PSF).

The PSF and other groups are fighting for a change in the law, saying it is hypocritical. They support an initiative by a group of women members of parliament to legalise abortions for social reasons.

It is an emotive issue in this predominantly Catholic country where the church has a big influence.

"We favour a change. The women should have the right to abort here and now," said Wanda Nowicka, president of the Federation for Women and Family Planning, an umbrella organisation for women's groups.

The law which came into effect last March limits abortions to cases where a

women's health or life are in danger, the foetus is damaged or a pregnancy is a result of rape or incest.

Anyone breaking the law faces up to two years in prison, except for the woman herself who cannot be punished.

Ms. Nowicka, who runs a hot-line for women, says the new law made it difficult to get abortions even in cases permitted under the law.

She recalls a woman in the southern Polish town of Krakow who became pregnant after a rape and went for an abortion in her local hospital.

The doctors refused, saying they no longer carried out abortions, even though she had a police report and a doctor's certifi-

cate. "Finally she got help," Ms. Nowicka said without specifying how.

Similar problems faced a 40-year-old blind woman, a mother of two with a nearly blind husband, who was afraid of having a handicapped child.

Help was also hard to find for a 44-year-old woman from Warsaw who was afraid to have another child after three difficult births by Caesarean section.

In private, some Polish gynaecologists admit they and their colleagues perform illegal abortions often. But they prefer not to discuss the subject for fear of ending up in prison.

Prices for abortions range from seven million to 20 million zlotys (\$350 to

\$1,000), compared with the average monthly income of about four million zlotys (\$200). A trip abroad is even more expensive.

An agency in Lublin in eastern Poland advertised summer weekend trips to the Ukraine for eight million zlotys (about \$400).

Ms. Nowicka estimates several hundred women have gone abroad for abortions since the new law was passed. Often the husband or lover pays for the operation and takes the woman to the hospital, but not all men want their child to be aborted.

In mid-November a man alerted the police in the western Polish town of Poznan, saying his girlfriend had just had an abortion in a private practice. His call

triggered one of the first investigations into the illegal trade.

Police searched the doctor's dustbins and found human tissue. Its examination should tell whether the woman had an abortion or a miscarriage, the Warsaw newspaper Zycie Warszawy quoted the Poznan prosecutor as saying.

"All this is pure hypocrisy," says Barbara Labuda, a deputy of the Democratic Union — the former government coalition partner — and a campaigner for a more liberal law.

She had about 50 other women members of the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, have drawn up a bill which would allow abortions for social and psychological reasons. They want it discussed in parliament.

Ms. Labuda hopes the newly-elected Sejm, which is now dominated by left-wing parties, will change the current law.



## The perfect Arabic

By Jean-Claude Elias

The modern computer was developed in the United States and Great Britain. Its "mother tongue" was therefore English. When the whole world started using computers, it became necessary to give the machines the possibility to process all national languages.

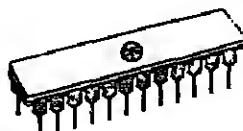
Those using Latin characters do not present any difficulty. They have the same characters set and are written in the same direction, that is from left to right. Implementing different characters and writing orientations was more difficult and presented the specialists with a new challenge. Arabic for instance, took a relatively long time to be well integrated in the world of data processing.

Arabic became available in the mid-seventies on large systems, and in the early eighties on personal computer (PC). The first implementations however did not satisfy the users. Using Arabic on early PCs meant accepting poor printing quality, slower machines and very complicated processing. Surprisingly, typewriters with excellent Arabic had been around for a long time.

By the late eighties, most problems had been solved. Arabic on computers was running well and became available to all users whether of main frames or PCs.

Once the experts had mastered the art, the users asked for more. Good handling of Arabic was not enough. Bilingual, mainly Arabic-English, processing

### chip talk



became in high demand. Being able to write English text with Arabic words inserted in them, and vice versa, was a feature that most users wanted. The additional technical difficulty did not scare the specialists and bilingual processing is now a common feature in most software.

If Arabic is now nearly perfect in the processing of plain data, it still leaves the purists of Arabic calligraphy thirsty. For unless one uses an advanced word processing programme and the best laser printer, the quality of the printout does not satisfy all. For the most demanding, even the "Arabic Word for Windows" programme and a laser printer do not always produce the result they expect. They believe, righteously, that a lot remains to be done in the characters drawing, in the curved parts of some letters and in the way letters are linked.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

### STRANGE BUT TRUE

- ★ The oldest pharmacy in Europe is still in the use today in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, which opened in 1317. They also opened an Old People's Home in 1347, and a medical service in 1301.
- ★ Milan cathedral took 579 years to build and seats a congregation of 40,000.
- ★ The archer fish can hit an insect up to 122 cm away with drops of water squirted from its mouth.
- ★ It takes 5 tonnes of rock to produce a piece of gold the size of a trouser button.
- ★ In most Dutch cities you can see herring stalls. The Dutch love to eat them there on the streets.
- ★ Natives of New Guinea often smoke their home-made cigarettes from the side.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### SAY IT IN ARABIC

#### AT THE HOTEL

- Which is the best hotel you recommend?  
Ma heya ahsan al-fanadiq allati toosi hiha?
- I prefer Jordan/Regency/Mariotte hotel.  
Ofaddil fondok al-Ordun/Regency/Mariotte.
- Is the service good there?  
Hal al-khidma mumtaza honak?
- Yes, and the rates are exceptionally moderate.  
Na'am wal-asar bisifa khasa mu'tadila.
- Then, I must make the reservation beforehand.  
Ezan, yajib an ahjiz mukaddaman.
- I'll stay a couple of days at least.  
Sawfa okcem yawmain ala akal.
- You're welcome, sir.  
Mariabab beka ya sayyedi.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

- JEWELS:** To dream of jewellery of any kind is always a bad sign: love troubles or business dangers.
- JOLLITY:** To dream of jollity and fun by night is good for those about to marry; to the poor a sign of good; to the rich a sign of trouble and loss.
- JOURNEY:** (Making one) Peace and contentment at home.
- JUDGE:** A bad dream: Beware of slander and malice.
- JUG:** (Drinking from one) Robust health and wholesome pleasures.
- JUMP:** To dream of jumping is unpropitious, foretelling obstacles that prevent fulfilment of a desire.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### HOROSCOPIC CHART

Here are the birth dates and characteristics of persons born between the dates mentioned. Since astrology is not infallible, do not take all these characteristics too seriously.

#### WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

Dec. 22nd to Jan. 30th

People born during this period have considerable mental ability and a keen business instinct. They are fond of the imaginative arts. They are proud; they like their own way and they see that they get it. Generally speaking, they are better fitted to lead than to follow others.

However, they do not take kindly to changes of any kind, and are annoyed by new-fangled ideas. They do not want the advice of other people and often resent it. They do not strike out in new directions and they avoid taking risks. They lack "push".

To these people we say:

Don't wait for opportunities-make them.

Don't let your pride persuade you to keep on the wrong road rather than turn back.

Don't be afraid of admitting and correcting a mistake.  
Don't run away from trouble: Meet it with a bold front.

### HUMOUR

- **CLIENT:** "I want the owner of the restaurant to complain to him about the bad food served here? Where's he?"
- WAITER:** "He's having his supper in the nearby restaurant."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **FATHER:** "How, could it be you are in the sixth grade and still don't know who George Washington is?"
- SON:** "Maybe he was one of the fifth grade students."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **UNCLE:** "Why did you fail the history exam?"
- NEPHEW:** "Because they asked me about things that happened before my birth thousands of years ago. How then could I get to know them?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **POLICEMAN:** "Did you steal the car?"
- THIEF:** "Never, never, you can search me, sir."

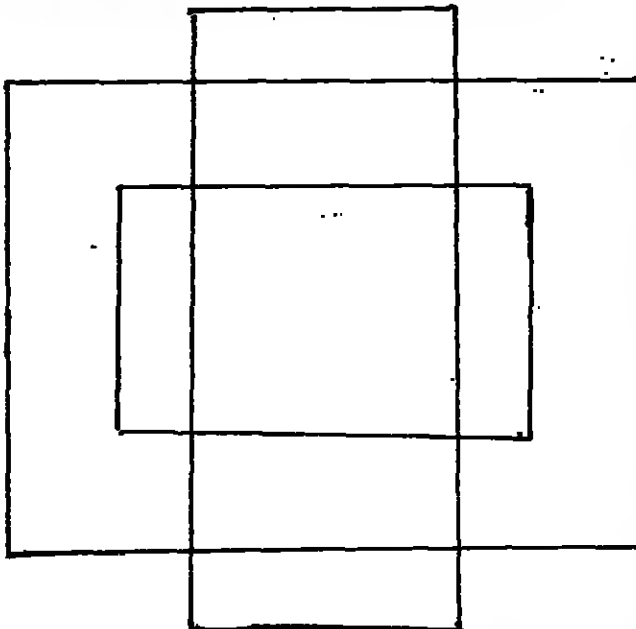
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- A Jew had taken his son into business and one day said: "Well, my boy, I've made a will and left everything to you."
- "Now, that's very good of you, father," replied the son, "but didn't it cost a lot for the lawyer and the fees?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### PUZZLES

Carefully examine the diagram hereunder.  
Try to count the number of oblongs included in it.  
How many are they?



### Thoughts for this week

In a time of war... the task of news-writers is easy: they have nothing to do but to tell that the battle is expected, and afterwards that a battle has been fought, in which we and our friends, whether conquering or conquered, did all, and our enemies did nothing — Samuel Johnson, English critic (1709-1784).

Education is a private matter between the person and the world of knowledge and experience, and has little to do with school or college — Lillian Smith, American writer and social critic (1897-1966).

Rewards and punishments are the lowest form of education — Chang-Tzu, Chinese philosopher (C. 369 B.C.-C. 286 B.C.).

## Take these broken wings

By E. Yaghi

While Westerners rushed out into winter snows to purchase pine trees for the Christmas season, a gray-haired woman wearing a yellowish white head-covering and a faded, tattered, black thobe, gently placed a wreath of scarlet poinsettias on a grave that occupied a quiet corner of their few acres of land north of the hills of Bethlehem. "We lived through six years of the intifada and now when we thought we'd finally taste freedom for the first time, you were shot down by a Jewish adolescent settler. It's all so useless, so pointless." She wept to the newly turned mound of dark dirt.

It was only such a short while ago that her husband Abu Khalil lived, plowed and worked on the land that he loved, she thought. She sat down near his grave as the bells of the little town of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, softly chimed in the distance, in celebration of Christmas Day. She grabbed the edge of her shawl and rubbed away the tears that dripped down her face and spattered onto the fresh grave of her once sole supporter in the harsh existence the occupation forced on all and spoke in a voice choked with emotion: "A few weeks ago, I brought for you your lunch while you worked in the field and called you saying, 'Come Abu Khalil, take a break from your work and relax for a while. I have some fresh bread which tastes delicious with this morning's butter and homegrown honey'."

She remembered how he threw down his hoe and walked over to where she had spread the lunch out on a blanket over the good coffee coloured earth which her husband inherited from his father and his grandfather before him. Crystals of sweat ran down his rosy slightly wrinkled face. He reached in his jacket pocket and wiped away the beads of perspiration with a blue cotton kerchief, and exclaimed gratefully: "I do declare, Im Khalil, you do make the best bread and butter this side of heaven. You sure know how to gratify a man's stomach! Pour me some tea, will you please?"

They had laughed together beneath the gray sky and hardly noticed the chill wind which blew towards them from the silent town of Bethlehem as if issuing a warning of an ominous omen. She had scolded her spouse in a gentle voice. "You work too hard my husband. Leave some for tomorrow. You're not as young as you used to be. At our age, it is better to take care of our health for it is the best weapon we have against the ill fortunes of life."

"You know me, my dear. I hate to be idle, for idleness is the begetter of senility. As long as I can keep these old rheumatic joints working and moving then I might ensure being able to get myself up the next morning but if I spend the remainder of my days flat on

my back, then I will age much faster and even my mind will begin to deteriorate. My wings might be broken, but I can still try and some day you and I will learn to fly again and will hear voices sing of freedom for our country. There will come a time when guns must turn into ploughshares and hate into tolerance. If we are lucky, we will live to see such a brave day when that war monster dragon with his red glaring eyes will be slain and his fire breathing breath will no more scorch the hearts of innocent people. Thank you for your lunch, your effort and your time, Im Khalil but you have kept me too long away from my chores. I want to finish before dusk."

She watched as he slowly got up and returned to his hoeing. She picked up the remnants of their meal and turned once more to observe her husband. He had deserted his digging and had climbed up on his small borrowed tractor when she heard a shot whine like a banshee through the peach trees and suddenly Abu Khalil slumped over the steering wheel. She ran to him as fast as she could and climbed up on the wheel and pulled on his shoulders and screamed: "No! It can't be!"

She felt something warm trickle over her hand and horrified, she withdrew it and stared down at a gaping hole in her husband's back. She struggled with his stiffening body and half-carried, half dragged him off the tractor and laid him on the dark ground. For a moment he opened his eyes and said with a gasping sound that rattled like death: "Take these broken wings, Im Khalil and learn to fly where the song of freedom is sung. I have now seen the great monster death which I always feared and know him to be only death, nothing more."

And she remembered how witnesses informed her that a Jewish teenager was seen running from the scene of his crime, carrying a shotgun. But oh, he had taken away in one instant her greatest treasure in life, her husband who had never harmed anyone. Another victim of the flood of hate that envelops the citizens of the Holy Land. As she sat mourning her fate as well as the death of Abu Khalil in the corner of her land beside his grave, Christmas shoppers in Western countries bustled to and from over glistening snow to the tune of piped Christmas carols with red and green ribbon presents bundled under their arms to place under twinkled pine trees in the spirit of peace and goodwill to mankind as far over the ocean of tears, agony and pain, mothers and wives like Im Khalil wondered if there ever would be a day when comprehensive and just peace could reign the land. She spoke to the mound of still silent earth: "Yes from dirt we came and to dirt we return. You gave me your broken wings, Abu Khalil, but you forgot to teach me how to fly. My greatest wish is to now join you where you lie, for all my hopes are buried with you and I have nothing left to live for."

## JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 23

10:00 News In English

8:30 Family Matters

10:20 Feature Film — Call Of The Wild

The Big Fix

Starring: Rick Schroder and Richard Newman

Steve is more than willing to help Eddie in his mid-year exams, only if Eddie promises to fix him up with a girl.

The movie recalls the adventures of a young man who moves north to Alaska, in search of gold; other gold-diggers were his enemies. His dog was his friend.

9:10 Reasonable Doubts

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Fighter For Hire

Sunday, Dec. 26

Starring: Michael Beck and Nancy Kwan

8:30 You Bet Your Life

An expert in the martial arts is hired by the American government to work on the release of American scientists held hostage.

Our weekly date with entertainment. Bill Cosby, the host, gives away the grand prize of \$10,000 to the winning contestants.

Friday, Dec. 24

9:10 Thirtysomething

8:30 E.N.G.

Melissa's successful photographic exhibition is overshadowed by her depression over lost and failed relationships with men.

Acid Test

10:00 News In English

9:10 Faces And Places

10:20 The Alien Years

10:20 The Men Who Killed Kennedy

11:10 Are You Being Served

Saturday, Dec. 25

The Witnesses

8:30 The Fanelli Boys

Thirty years after the Kennedy assassination, those eyewitnesses, close to the killing suffer their own haunting images from that dreadful day.

There's too much arguments and fights among the boys: Uncle Angelo suggests the boys go and see a shrink.

11:10 The Golden Palace

9:00 Da Beat's On

Its Beginning To Look A Lot Less Like Christmas

Muhammad Al Jazireh brings you the latest pop songs from the charts in America and Europe.

A group of newly-divorced and depressed people make reservations to stay at the Golden Palace on one condition: That no signs of Christmas Eve celebrations be present. But the occasion proves too holy and grand to be missed.

9:30 Perspectives

Our weekly talk show, with host Mureed Hammad



Gloria Estefan in concert Monday at 9:10

Monday, Dec. 27

her mother live a hard life. But, things change for the better.

8:30 Delta

10:00 News In English

A Christmas Tale

10:20 Feature Film — The Wilderness Family

Delta's Christmas present to her boss, Darden, is to bring back to him his drunken and failed daughter.

The Robinsons move away from city life and decide to live in the country. They find that the country is more than what they expected.

9:10 Gloria Estefan In Concert

10:00 News In English

Wednesday, Dec. 29

10:20 The International Magic Awards

8:30 Too Close For Comfort

From the magical city of Hollywood, Universal Studios present The International Awards Festival, in honour of the best ten magicians in the world, each in his specialised category.

The Cosmic Cow vs The Oval Office

Henry has angered the Oval Office with an insult that appeared in his latest edition of The Cosmic Cow. He's been asked to apologise, or get fired.

Tuesday, Dec. 28

9:10 Documentary

8:30 Night Court

10:00 News In English

New Year's Eve is nothing special for the family of Night Court. But it turns out to be an exciting evening for them.

10:20 Till Murder Do Us Part

Starring: Merdith Baxter and Steven Collins

9:10 Act Of Will

It is a story of "giving and sacrifice". A daughter and

A hysterical wife resorts to a double murder as the price for a marriage that was broken after sixteen years.

مركز الصحافة



## New westerns: Politically correct, accurate

By Francois Robert  
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood producers are preparing an onslaught of new-genre western films that meet the criteria of being politically correct and more historically accurate than their counterparts of past years.

The new wave is prompted in part by the box office and Academy Awards success of Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* in 1990 and last year's *Unforgotten* directed by and starring Clint Eastwood.

One of the first in the series, *Geronimo*, directed by Walter Hill, includes native American Wes Studi in the title role — although he is a Cherokee, not Apache like Geronimo — and 200 other Indian actors.

The other Indians are largely Mesquiteros, since there are few Chiricahua Apaches living. As in *Dances With Wolves*, the actors speak in their native tongue, with subtitles used for viewers.

"We want to do away with misconceptions, talk to

people about the truth of American Indian people and their history," said Sonny Skyhawk, a native American consultant for *Geronimo*, which is now showing in U.S. cinemas.

Two classic-style shoot 'em up westerns due out soon are based on the life of the legendary lawman Wyatt Earp.

George Cosmatos' *Tombstone*, due for U.S. release this month, with Kurt Russell in the role of Earp, contains the standard western fare of showdowns between the bad guys and

good guys.

Wyatt Earp, by Lawrence Kasdan, with Kevin Costner in the title role, is scheduled for release next July in the United States.

Other films under production take a new look at the role of women in the American west frontier, including Sam Raimi's *The Quick And The Dead*, with Sharon Stone starring as a woman seeking to avenge the killing of her family.

*Bad Girls*, directed by Jonathan Kaplan, features Drew Barrymore, Madeleine Stowe and

Andie McDowell in a film about prostitutes who leave Colorado to start a new life in Texas.

Additionally, Hollywood is working on productions of *Even Cowgirls Get The Blues*, *Lightning Jack*, and a film inspired by an old TV series, *Maverick*, starring Mel Gibson.

Television is not being left out. The Cable Turner Network Television, which recently aired its own version of *Geronimo*, is preparing a 20-episode series on American Indian history.

## American artist honoured at Russia's Hermitage Museum

By Susan Gallagher  
The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — For sculptor Tim Holmes, recognition came thousands of miles from his Montana home, at an acclaimed museum known for its collections of art by Rembrandt, Michelangelo and other masters.

After years of hearing his metal work wasn't good enough for the major museums of the United States, Holmes has drawn raves for his show at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. He is the first contemporary American sculptor to be honoured with a solo exhibit there.

"Sculptures by Tim Holmes deserve being displayed in the best museums of the world," Mikhail Piotrovsky, director of the Hermitage, told a St. Petersburg newspaper.

Holmes, just back from several weeks in Russia, said he was overwhelmed by the public response to his show, and to art in general. Even a man he remembers as "a doberman of a customs inspector" shyly asked for Holmes' autograph on a catalogue for the Hermitage exhibit.

The 38-year-old sculptor, whose artistic form is similar to Rodin's, works in a sunny studio a few blocks from the Montana capital. The international attention he's receiving is a big break in a career that dates to his childhood.

Holmes said he's had a lot of "hit and miss" shows in the United States, and a few exhibits at such places as the Paul Mellon Arts

Centre in Connecticut. But he hasn't really unlocked the secure gates of America's major museums.

"Americans respond more to fame than they do to quality," Holmes said. The month-long Russian show that ran through Dec. 5 provided a measure of fame that he hopes will remove some barriers.

About 35 Holmes works were on display. Three will remain in the permanent collection of the Hermitage.

Holmes' pieces now sell for a few thousand dollars to \$10,000, and he supports himself through sculpture. In the competitive art world, that in itself is an achievement.

A show at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle turned out to be the break that led to the Hermitage invitation. A visiting Russian professor saw Holmes' sculpture, and got things rolling.

Funding for the Hermitage project was arranged largely by a California businessman who collects Holmes' art. Gerald Alderson of Kenetech Corp., a wind-power business, also put up the money for Holmes' Helena studio. Alderson gets sculpture in return.

Holmes' credits include an ongoing commission by Physicians for Social Responsibility. The produces "the healing touch," graceful hands with two fingers ending in doves, which the doctors present semiannually as a peace award. Recipients include former President Jimmy Carter, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Dr. Jonas Salk, Norman Cousins and George Kennan, former U.S. ambassador to the

Soviet Union. Holmes' art has many themes: Pain, disappointment, war and peace, love, inequality, the mother-and-child bond. He comes from a long line of Methodist ministers, and religion is never far from his work.

"I try to raise some life and death issues," he said. "I think part of an artist's job is to act like a town crier," Holmes describes art as "the clear voice across the tumult" in each generation.

Pieces in St. Petersburg include *Bus Stop In The First World*, on the consumptive way of life in developed nations; *The Blast*, on the nuclear threat; *China Peace*, on the freedom movement in China; and *The Healing Touch*.

The exhibit catalogue includes Holmes' comments about each piece, but he told readers that trying to penetrate the meaning of art with words "is like trying to split wood with a begonia petal."

Some of the propulsion in his career has come from the Montana Logging And Ballet Co., which presents travelling shows of political satire and music. Holmes, one of the four performers in the act, shows his sculpture at these, and he has gained some followers that way.

The Logging And Ballet Co. began about 20 years ago as a recruiting gimmick at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, where Holmes was a student. He earned a fine arts degree there, went on to art school in London and travelled to some of Europe's leading museums to see what he could learn.

## Fathers of 'tropicalia' still in vanguard

By Gary Richman  
The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Twenty-six years ago, two rising young musicians mixed Brazil's lilting rhythms with rock 'n' roll, added poetic lyrics with an attitude and made history.

"Tropicalia" became a benchmark in Brazilian pop music. It launched a style of music — "tropicalismo" — and propelled its creators, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, to international stardom and into exile by a right-wing military regime.

Now, the two have teamed up again for a commemorative recording called — what else? — *Tropicalia 2* and, once again, they've taken the music world by storm.

*Tropicalia 2* sold out its first pressing of 60,000 copies in just two weeks, a huge success by local standards and a boon for Brazil's recession-struck recording industry.

"The record of the year," Tarik De Souza, perhaps Brazil's most respected music critic, wrote of the album. "It was the dynamic duo's way of celebrating

one revolution by creating another."

In the politically charged lead song *Haiti*, Gil and Veloso paint a brutal portrait of racism and police brutality over a pulsing rap rhythm.

"No one is a citizen," the lyrics throb. "Think of Haiti, pray for Haiti, Haiti is here." Then, a contradiction offering redemption: "Haiti is not here."

Rap and African rhythms are present again in a stirring cover of the Jimi Hendrix classic *Wait Until Tomorrow*.

Percussion is a show apart in *Tropicalia 2*. The drum corps is commanded by dredlocked wild man Carlinhos Brown, whose unique "Timbalada" sound is drawn from the percussion hands of Salvador, the capital of Afro-Brazilian culture on the north east coast.

"Gil and I represent Afro-Brazilians," Veloso, who is a Mulatto, said proudly. "And in Brazil the mixture of all races has a depth found nowhere else in the world."

African-rooted mysticism

is a strong influence in their music. Many songs are driven by the pulsing drums of candomble religious rites and include references to the "Orixas," the pantheon of African deities.

Gil, who is black, also borrows heavily from Nigerian juju and Jamaican reggae.

"Gil and Caetano are...bringing the future into the present," popular singer Elba Ramalho said in an interview. "They are our musical mentors, always pointing to new directions."

Ney Matogrosso, another popular singer, called the pair "the great alchemists of national thought, the artists who most influenced the behaviour of the country, that affected the Brazilian mentality."

In an industry dominated by American record labels, Gil and Caetano have remained in the vanguard. Their songs compete on the charts with the heavily publicised singles from Madonna and Michael Jackson.

At a show this fall to kick off *Tropicalia 2* thousands of teenagers packed Rio's

downtown Sambadrome Parade Grounds and sang along with the pair's old hits written before many of the listeners were born.

"Gil and Caetano are to Brazil what Bob Dylan is to the United States and the Beatles are to England," said concert-goer Gustavo Barbosa, 43. "They brought us into contact with the new youth counterculture in North America and Europe."

*Tropicalia* was the musical expression of an artistic new wave in South America's largest nation. It also expressed the rebellion of a generation bridling under the censorship imposed by the generals who seized power in 1964.

"The bossa nova had already been taken to the maximum state of perfection in the '60s by Joao Gilberto and Tom Jobim," Veloso said in an interview. "We had to innovate to keep busy."

"Caetano and I decided that 'rockifying' music here would be a good thing to do," Gil added.

The two exude an infectious good humour and

hubbly energy. Only their hair, now going to gray, and deeper wrinkles are reminders that these gentlemen are 51.

Veloso recalled the release of *tropicalia*. He and Gil were jailed and fled into exile from 1969 to 1972.

"I knew something was up when police told me to bring a toothbrush," he laughed.

In London, the two continued their musical experimentation. They wove the rhythmic, upbeat rhythms from their native Salvador with the music industry's new technological advances.

They returned home in 1972 and teamed up with Veloso's sister, Maria Bethania, and young Gal Costa, who went on to become top billed stars in their own right. The result was the *Doces Barbaros* — Portuguese for sweet Barbarians — and another huge success.

However, Brazilian leftists complained that the feel-good music of Gil and Veloso was alienated and politically irrelevant.

## Fighting back against art forgers

By Clare Pedrick

MILAN, Italy — For anyone who has ever spent hard-earned savings on a coveted 18th century inlaid table, only to get home and discover that this purchase is a worthless reproduction, help is now at hand. German-born art lover and physicist Goffredo Matthaeus, a man who had had his own share of unpleasant surprises, has opened the world's first museum dedicated to exposing the tricks of the art forgery business, and to protecting the unwary public.

In a splendid palazzo in the lee of Milan's Sforzesco Castle, where Leonardo Da Vinci was a frequent visitor, Dr. Matthaeus has stocked 12 rooms with treasures from his own rich private collection, and peppered them with the odd fake to help visitors hone their skills of detection. Would-be purchasers unable to travel to the museum in person can send for step-by-step manuals prepared by the doctor, which explain the most common pitfalls in buying objects of value, from antique furniture to Greek vases, and from old pistols to African masks.

"The idea of this museum is to help people learn how to distinguish the genuine article from the fake," said Dr. Matthaeus, who has lived in Italy for 30 years, most of them spent researching new techniques to combat the forgers. "Thousands of people live off counterfeiting works of art. Sixty per cent of everything people buy in the way of art is fake. In certain sectors, that figure rises as high as 90 or even 98 per cent."

Especially high-risk areas include glass, pottery, old prints and antique furniture. According to Dr. Matthaeus, 75 per cent of all furniture sold as antique is nothing of the sort. Often, the forgers are so skillful that even the dealers are

taken in. "Most antique dealers act in good faith," he said. "They buy things without knowing they are false and they sell them without knowing it either."

Small comfort for the buyer who spends his cash on the Louis XIV chaise longue, only to find it was made in some Rome back street less than half a decade ago. Italy is the headquarters of the counterfeiting business, said Dr. Matthaeus. "That is partly because it has the largest concentration of art work in Europe and the second largest in the world after China. But it's also because it still has a great many small workshops, producing art and craft items in various forms."

Most of the forgeries end up being exported, often to Britain, France, Switzerland and the U.S. "Pottery purportedly taken from archaeological sites goes mainly to the U.S. and Switzerland," said Dr. Matthaeus. "If you meet someone in either of those countries who has what he says is an Etruscan vase sitting on his mantelpiece, it's almost 100 per cent certain it's a fake. The U.S. is especially full of pre-Colombian, Chinese and Egyptian pottery. Almost none of it authentic."

Dr. Matthaeus, 65, decided to open the museum after learning the hard way how easy it is to be taken in by crooks. Born in the city of Dresden, into a family with a long history of studying and collecting art, he inherited his aunt and uncle's impressive collection of treasures, assembled over a lifetime. "There were some notable gaps in the collection, so I decided to fill them in by buying things myself," he said. He was in his mid-thirties, and fairly naive. "I made a series of bad buys, purchasing fakes without knowing it," he said. "I was so disappointed, I was determined to get my revenge. So

I decided to put my experience as a physicist at the service of art, and to learn how to distinguish the real from the fake using science."

His first forays took him to the research laboratories of several major European universities, where his scientific background helped him gain access. There he learned how to test artifacts using techniques such as carbon-dating and chemical analysis. But the more he delved, the more he became convinced there was room for developing methods more easily available to the general public. He began to do his own research. And gradually the idea of the Milan project started to take shape.

There are no glass in this museum, even though some of the pieces on display are worth a small fortune. Guided by staff, visitors are encouraged to use microscopes and magnifying lenses, and to touch, feel and even smell the objects they are examining. Clear, precise instructions, written in several languages, explain the tell-tale signs to look for. The tour of the museum becomes a kind of game, with visitors putting their new-found knowledge to the test as they do the circuit. "The idea of this museum is that it should be accessible to the ordinary buyer, so we have tried to make the information simple and easily understandable so that within as little as a quarter of an hour, they are able to put it into practice," said Dr. Matthaeus.

Antique furniture, paintings, jewelry, silver, ceramics, clocks and firearms are all covered in detail. There is a major sector on African art — of which an estimated 95 per cent sold on the open market is fake — and another on Buddhist art.

In almost all cases, the rules for telling a fake from the real thing are surprisingly simple. "A lot of it is

plain common sense. It is also sensitivity that enables you to establish the authenticity of an object," the doctor said. "You only have to take an object in your hand and touch it and examine it. Only exceptional cases require scientific examination."

For amateur hunters of antique furniture, the key pointer is woodworm. Beware of any piece where the holes made by the woodworm are regularly distributed over its surface — it's almost sure to be a fake. "The woodworm is intelligent, so it tends to go where there is a lot to eat," said the doctor. "In a piece of furniture, statue or other ornament, that means where the wood is thickest." He points to a pair of tall wooden 19th century church candlesticks. The base, where they bulge out, is riddled with small holes. Higher up, the narrow neck is almost untouched. These pieces are genuine. "If a wooden object is uniformly dotted with woodworm...it means someone has thrown the piece of wood into a bag of woodworm to give it the appearance of being aged. In such cases, the woodworm attacks the wood indiscriminately."

Earthenware pottery, be it Roman or pre-Colombian, can be tested with the most basic of methods, by wetting one's finger with saliva, rubbing it on the pottery surface, and sniffing hard. "If an object has been in the earth for 2,000 years the pottery will have absorbed the smell of the soil," said Dr. Matthaeus, dabbing a wet finger on a piece of genuine Egyptian pottery and unleashing strong smell of earth. On the doctor's desk is an exquisite sculpture, apparently Etruscan, but when it is rubbed with a wetted finger there is no smell. "It's a fake," he said, smiling. "A very good one, but a fake all the same."

Icons, currently being

sent over in their thousands from parts of Eastern Europe, have a high risk factor. "The Eastern Europeans have immediately worked out how to make very convincing counterfeits, especially in Poland," said Dr. Matthaeus. A simple rule should help any prospective buyer tell whether or not he is being offered the genuine article. Icons are traditionally painted by nuns and monks. "They use 9 layers of paint, each of which has a spiritual significance — black is for hell and white is divine. So if the icons are not raised off the surface of the painting, they are false."

If you want to be sure that print you are being offered at an antiques market is really as old as the stallholder says, try holding it up to the light. The flimsy effect of hand-made paper is the thing to look for here. If yours has it, the chances are you are looking at the real thing. "A print on hand-made paper is almost always old," said Dr. Matthaeus. "If it doesn't have this effect, it is definitely not older than the end of the last century, when paper began to be produced industrially." Prints torn from books are another good sign. "That's because faking an entire book is far more expensive and difficult than faking a single print."

Painted porcelain and antique glass are difficult areas. Said Dr. Matthaeus: "There are thousands and thousands of Gallé pieces of glass in circulation, but almost all of them are false. There is no scientific way of proving whether they were made yesterday or 80 years ago."

But amber — one of the most copied stones in the jewelry business — is a synch. Plunge a heated needle into the amber where it will not show and sniff the smell that is released. If it is an odor of woody resin, you are on the right track. This



Visitors to Dr. Goffredo Matthaeus' museum in Milan learn how to recognise fake artwork by using simple tricks

is the natural essence of real amber, which is made from centuries-old deposits of fallen trees. If the odor is acrid, put your money back in your pocket. It is sure to be synthetic. "This test is foolproof," said Dr. Matthaeus. "There is a great deal of fake amber around."

The same test works for ivory. The genuine article is odorless when a heated pin is pressed into it. Fake ivory gives off a strong smell of chlorine, from the synthetic resin.

If old paintings are your passion, look closely at the "craquelure" or cracked effect on the painting's surface. It should be more pronounced at the edges, near the frame, since this is the point of greatest stress. On an artificially aged canvas, the effect will be more haphazard. Visitors to the Milan museum learn that forgers obtain the craquelure effect by rolling a canvas up and putting it into a warm oven. Colours are also a good pointer, both for paintings and for ceramics. Buyers should beware of anything that is too brightly painted, however attractive it might seem.

"Up until the end of the 19th century, only natural colours were used, and these were impure and much duller," said Dr. Matthaeus. "From the end of the 19th century onwards, industrially made colours came into play, which are much brighter, making contrasts far more stark."

Ironically, objects which are immediately pleasing to the eye have a higher probability of being fakes. Art forgers know the unschooled buyer usually goes on instinct, and is generally looking for something attractive with which to adorn his home. A genuine old artefact will often have an unappealing dull patina — the effect of natural ageing, and muted, even lifeless colour tones.

African masks and sculptures are the classic example, says the German physicist, who has devoted a major sector to this forgery-ridden field. If the face-mask you have brought back from your vacation in Kenya is big, with a calm or smiling face, you can be fairly sure you have been had. The same goes if it is shiny and polished. Real ones often have a dull, pitted finish, where insects have eaten away at the wood. "Genuine masks tend to be small — hand-sized, with a patina that is often quite unattractive," said Dr. Matthaeus. "The original masks were carved to instill respect and terror."

Today's masks have far more refined and serene expressions, which are more pleasing to us. That's a dead giveaway.

Twice a year, the doctor organises a series of conferences at the museum, gathering experts from all over the world to compare new methods and research techniques. Upcoming appointments include a session on how not to be conned in Europe's many street antiques fairs and another on the markets of Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

According to Dr. Matthaeus, many dealers who think they are too sharp to be taken in would do well to pay a visit to the museum. They need to keep themselves up to date, he maintains — because the forgers certainly do. "In the antiques business especially, there are a lot of dealers who think they know it all, but they often get taken in," said Dr. Matthaeus. "The forgers are very well prepared, they study a lot of books on the subject and they often know more about their own field than any of the experts. And they are always inventing new techniques. In fact, to be honest, I'm convinced that some of the visitors here are counterfeiters." — World News Link.



## Floating eye clinic gives West a sight of Russian expertise

By Clar Ni Chonghaile  
Reuters

**GIBRALTAR** — The Russian ship moored in the shadow of Gibraltar's rock looks like a luxury liner with its elegant restaurant, discreet bars and luxurious foyer.

It has a souvenir shop selling bright scarves and smiling Russian dolls.

But this is no frivolous pleasure craft. On board surgeons are restoring sight in the gleaming high-tech surgery of a floating eye clinic.

Each day, they operate on about 40 people using techniques pioneered at the renowned Moscow Research Institute for Eye Microsurgery.

Tackling everything from

cataracts to glaucoma, the surgeons are skilled in laser surgery and adept at wielding the tiny, diamond blades used to make infinitesimal incisions in the delicate cornea to cure shortsightedness.

"Many people treat this as a miracle ship because they have heard stories about it," says David Oliva, press agent for FLOKS — the Russian acronym for Floating Eye Service.

He insists that there is nothing "weird or strange" about what happens on board. "It's a combination of technology, experience and a lot of investment for many years."

Some patients would add a few things to the list.

"It's not just the technol-

ogy, though there's that too. It's the humanity and the love," said Ramon Landres who has visited the eye clinic many times.

The tiny British colony of Gibraltar with its bizarre mix of British, Spanish and African is the ideal base for the cosmopolitan clinic which set sail from Russia in 1989.

The crew of 160 is Ukrainian, the medical team Russian. The ship's narrow passages echo to the soft Spanish of the south, British English and the exotic sound of Russian.

Patients climb cautiously up the gangway, are greeted in reception and wait to be examined.

"They do very detailed examinations of the eye inside and outside. They mea-

sure the cornea length and how deep it is so that the incisions are very, very accurate. Everything is very mathematical," says Oliva, who underwent surgery himself a month ago.

He had radial keratotomy — an operation to cure myopia that takes only about seven minutes.

"After the operation you feel a bit uncomfortable...It's like having a bit of sand in your eye. It's very itchy."

The equipment used was the latest in German technology, he said. "In the Soviet Union, they devoted money to the arms race, space, medicine and sport. That is why obviously they are the best at it," he added.

Nikki Sutherland and her husband John made the trip across the border from Spain's Costa Del Sol after reading about the ship.

"My husband had a stroke two years ago and it affected his eye. He's going blind in the left eye," she said.

Sutherland had been seeing a specialist in Spain but to no avail and they decided to give the Russian ship a try.

Yisarde Beloyeroova, a small red-haired Muscovite, is the ship's acupuncturist and treats patients after their operations.

"When I treat the eyes, I treat the whole body and nearly every man feels that he is healthier and has more energy," she said, her eyes shining. "We can laugh and

love life."

She is delighted to be in Gibraltar and her only regret is that their success leaves so little time for sightseeing.

"It is a new country and new people. I want to look and look and look," she said in halting English and added with a grin: "I also want to work but I want to look much more."

The idea of a floating clinic was the brainwave of Professor Svyatoslov Fyodorov, head of the Moscow institute and one of the world's leading ophthalmologists.

Prof. Fyodorov is known as the Henry Ford of eye surgery for pioneering swift, economical treatment of patients.

The clinic was seen as a way of earning hard currency to finance research and of offering the public a unique service.

In the theatre, five beds radiate outwards from the centre — a set-up known as the multi-station daisy petal system.

Outside in the waiting-room, the patients huddle together, chatting anxiously. They wear green paper tops and trousers and plastic covers on their shoes.

The ship has been moored here within sight of the African coast since May and it plans to stay at least until next April.

Prices are lower than those charged in mainland clinics with an initial examination costing about \$60

and further tests around \$460. A straightforward myopia operation costs up to \$2,300 but if there are other problems, this can rise to \$3,460.

"It's cheaper than average. The thing is they have Russian wages. That's how they can keep costs so low," said Oliva.

The ship has already called at Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and docked in Cyprus. Counting both stops, the team saw around \$16,000 people and operated on \$8,000.

When the Soviet Union started to disintegrate in 1991, the team returned home temporarily before setting off again this year. The ship hopes to sail for Mexico next.

## Third World initiative needed in health research

By Sonya Hepinstall  
Reuters

**BANGKOK** — International scientists say the Third World must take the initiative in medical research if it wants to see progress in finding cures for the diseases that plague it.

Without a push from the developing world, industrialised nations will continue to divert most of their vast resources to research in diseases that are not the main concerns of most of the world's peoples, the scientists said during a visit to Thailand.

"Developing countries would have difficulty putting a lot of resources into the more basic long-term research...but they must invest something to mobilise the scientific talent throughout the world to address (their) problems," said John Evans, former chairman of the board of trustees at the Rockefeller Foundation.

Mr. Evans said 95 per cent of what the world

spends on research goes toward five per cent of its disabilities, namely those illnesses like cancer that plague the industrialised world.

The remaining five per cent of research money goes to the 95 per cent of remaining, so-called premature disabilities such as malaria and hepatitis that are the daily afflictions suffered by so many in the developing world.

"More money needs to go, of the whole scientific community of the world, to address the problems of developing countries," he said.

The former president of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Dr. V. Ramalingaswami, agreed. He said the lopsidedness also showed up in research in such areas as contraception, which still relied on technologies developed 30 years ago.

"The industrialised world, the multinational

pharmaceutical (companies), have less and less interest in developing a new contraceptive," he said, blaming low profit margins.

Dr. Ramalingaswami said Third World initiative had already shown results, in laying the groundwork for the most promising vaccines for malaria and Dengue fever.

"The ideas that are coming out of some of the Third World countries are very exciting. And the industrialised world will benefit from these as well," Dr. Ramalingaswami said.

Dr. Ramalingaswami and Mr. Evans, members of Thailand's Prince Mahidol Award Foundation's International Award Committee, were in Bangkok to screen candidates for the \$50,000 International Prize in Medicine and Public Health.

They said good and efficient management of health knew no nationalities or political systems and could

be found in countries as diverse as Chile, China and Cuba.

They praised China in particular for comprehensive health care that allowed for life expectancy rates just short of those of the United States.

At the same time they found fault with Vietnam, saying its health system which had started out much like China's had been unravelling since 1985 when it started to implement Western-style economic reforms.

Medicine in the West was at a crossroads as physicians and scientists started to question basic assumptions about medical care, they said.

With 30 per cent of all medical expenditure spent on the last 60 days of life, many groups are starting to re-examine the need to keep patients alive for as long as possible, they said.

"We've done a very bad job of presenting the options," Mr. Evans said.

## Researchers, activists join on breast cancer plan

**WASHINGTON (R)** — Researchers activists and policy-makers have vowed to formulate a national plan to combat breast cancer, which strikes one in eight American women and kills 46,000 a year.

"Everyone in this room understands that this disease rips at the very soul of women," said Donna Shalala, the government's chief health policy-maker. "We have to shake people out of complacency, whatever it takes."

Ms. Shalala, the Clinton administration's secretary of health and human services, spoke at a meeting of several hundred gathered at the U.S. National Institutes of Health in suburban Washington to map a united strategy against the disease.

The federal government will spend nearly \$300 mil-

lion this year on breast cancer research, and Ms. Shalala told Reuters she wants the action plan on President Bill Clinton's desk in six weeks so it can help shape next year's spending decisions.

Ms. Shalala urged participants to focus on immediate returns, arguing against lengthy recommendations that she warned might end up gathering dust on government shelves.

"The plan that we produce must address why the incidence of breast cancer is steadily rising, and what action we must take to detect breast cancer earlier, when we have a better chance of saving lives," Ms. Shalala said.

Several women addressing the conference expressed anger at what they view

as the medical establishment's lackadaisical commitment to women's health issues but said change was in the air.

"I believe that our collective anger is justified," Ms. Shalala said, urging participants to channel their anger into shaping the plan to fight the disease.

She recommended that all interested groups and individuals put their heads together after 2.6 million women signed petitions to the president seeking a renewed focus on the killer disease.

Representative Louise Slaughter, a New York Democrat, said women had been galvanised by government funding a decade ago of a multiyear study of heart disease that studied 22,000 men but not a single woman.

"The first thing we have to do is recognise that we constitute the majority in this country — 52 per cent," Ms. Slaughter said.

Senator Barbara Mikulski, a Maryland Democrat, criticised the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs, saying the two agencies failed to pay sufficient attention to women's health needs.

She said FDA leaders had been "untethered, unfocused on the needs of women" while Veterans Affairs researchers were "most lackluster" in their concern for women veterans.

Ms. Mikulski also scored doctors for treating female patients as assemblages of body parts rather than "whole women."

## Reduced sunlight can cause depression

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Despite the holidays, it's the sad time of year for millions of people the world over. Experts say long nights and gloomy days can cause seasonal affective disorder, the depression and listlessness of the "winter blues."

Dr. Norman E. Rosenthal, a psychiatrist with the National Institute of Mental Health, said that the short days and reduced sunlight of winter trigger a change in brain chemistry among many people. The change may set off a vicious cycle of depression now formally recognised in medical literature as seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

"Winter after winter, these people experience lethargy and fatigue, sadness and despair," Dr. Rosenthal told a news conference. He said the illness disrupts personal relationships, causes victims to overeat, gain weight and to become indifferent toward their jobs.

For years, the "winter blues" have been regarded as "psychiatric curiosities," Dr. Rosenthal said. But the

publication this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) of sad case studies represents "an acknowledgement by the medical community that this is a real illness."

Dr. Rosenthal reports in the JAMA article that people suffering from SAD have been successfully treated by systematic exposure to high levels of artificial light. Somehow, he said, this added light absorbed by the eyes restores the balance of brain chemicals.

About 6 per cent of the American population, some 10 million people, suffer severe forms of SAD, while another 14 per cent, or 25 million people, have a milder form, he said.

"We estimate that about one million children and adolescents are affected by SAD," said Dr. Rosenthal. The condition can lead to disruptive behaviour in school, short attention span and disinterest in learning, he said.

Women, by a margin of 3 or 4 to one, are more often affected by SAD than men, and the disorder in women

usually starts after puberty and diminishes after menopause.

"We speculate that female reproductive hormones somehow sensitise the brain to the effects of light deprivation," said Dr. Rosenthal.

Incidence of SAD is directly related to where people live, he said, with those farthest from the equator most often affected. Studies have shown SAD symptoms in about 10 per cent of people in New Hampshire, which has long winter nights, while only about 1.5 per cent are affected in Florida, where the southern winter days are longer, Dr. Rosenthal said.

SAD also is common in the upper Midwest, where a combination of winter and cloudy weather causes a reduction in sunlight. M. Lawrence Nicodemus, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said in the Great Lakes area there is an average of about 220 hours of sunlight a month in the summer, but only 80 to 120

hours a month during the winter.

Studies have suggested that the dimmed natural light of winter somehow signals the body to reduce levels of two brain chemicals, a neurotransmitter called Serotonin and a hormone called Melatonin. Dr. Rosenthal said that some people seem to be more sensitive than others to these changes.

Dr. Rosenthal said that exposure to light about 20 times brighter than ordinary indoor lighting has been shown to control SAD. Industry has developed special light boxes, costing \$400 to \$500, that successfully control the disorder, but the psychiatrist warned that these light treatments should be taken under the guidance of a physician.

The light therapy does not require special light radiation, such as ultraviolet rays, he said. Bright illumination from fluorescent tubes seems to do the trick when patients are exposed in a systematic manner at some point during each winter day, said Dr. Rosenthal.

## Crack smokers at risk of AIDS

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Smoking crack cocaine puts young Americans — particularly women — at high risk of catching AIDS, a new study shows.

Intravenous drug users who share needles are in the most danger, but crack smokers aren't far behind because they're likely to have frequent, unsafe sex under influence of the drug, researchers reported.

"HIV (AIDS virus) prevention programmes that target crack smokers, especially women, are needed," said Dr. Brian Edlin of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "There is an increasing prevalence of HIV among

crack-smoking women... that is very disturbing."

Although the majority of AIDS patients still are men, the fatal disease is increasing almost four times as fast among women. And they are passing AIDS to their babies; the CDC recorded a 16.6 per cent jump in new cases among infants and toddlers last year.

Disturbed by those numbers, the CDC is trying to discover why, despite safe-sex education aimed at women, heterosexual contact has overtaken intravenous drug use as the primary cause of infection in women. The crack study, presented at an AIDS con-

ference recently, shows non-IV drugs are one reason.

In another development, researchers at the conference also reported that a hemophiliac who passed the AIDS virus to his younger brother, probably by sharing a razor, actually gave the teenager two strains of the disease.

"This doesn't have im-

plications for patients," said Dr. Harold Jaffe of the CDC. "But it makes the case interesting academically. Testing for more than one strain in transmission isn't routinely done."

Two weeks ago, the CDC confirmed that the older brother infected the younger. The agency released the first details of the case at the AIDS meeting.

### SOLUTION

#### PUZZLES

Number of oblongs in the diagram is: 36 (thirty-six)

## WEEKEND CROSSWORD

### PEOPLE IN PLACES

By Barbara Gordon

ACROSS  
1 White robes for priests  
5 Name in journalism  
10 Refurb  
14 Father of a farm  
18 Secular  
19 New Zealand native  
20 La — Milan  
21 Actor known for his role in Germany  
22 Father on an island near Africa  
24 Discreet on a not gregarious  
27 Wasp  
29 One  
30 Sully — (beak)  
31 Day — (Adams)  
32 Spots  
33 Solid ingredient

36 Salary help  
38 Live birds  
42 — "Don Jovanni"  
43 Drive goes to gambling town  
46 Huzzah  
47 Moral lapse  
48 — "Loved You"  
49 Full drink  
50 Marmalade  
51 Fish  
52 Pa. senator in Newfound  
53 — Carlo  
54 Windflowers  
55 "Instead of silver, (black)"  
56 Supreme Court justice  
57 — (Adams)  
58 Han  
59 High school grades

64 Street talk  
65 — "Mama"  
66 Stripped breast  
67 Telegraphy  
68 Instruments  
71 Bath room  
72 Singer in  
73 Salsa  
74 Sensitive  
75 Sensitive  
76 Strip — (line)  
77 Dove call  
78 Laid out  
79 Swiss waterway  
80 A vessel in the Middle East  
81 Horse  
82 — (not dead)  
83 Edible brown mushroom

84 Great talent  
85 Lack of confidence  
86 Put into bondage  
87 Soft parts  
88 Dyke  
89 Baby  
90 Dishes  
91 Ring  
92 Champ  
93 — (not)  
94 Say it can't be  
95 — Park, Colo.  
96 Author of "The Hobbit"

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98 Sounds of excitement  
99 Catalogue  
100 Southern  
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102 Food  
103 Post in Born.  
104 Singer in Canada  
105 Musical  
106 Nurse  
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113 Author of "The Hobbit"

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116 Lack of confidence  
117 Put into bondage  
118 Soft parts  
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126 — Park, Colo.  
127 Author of "The Hobbit"

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### Diagramless

17 x 17, By Adam Christel

ACROSS  
1 Low voice  
2 Inevitable destruction  
3 Water vapor  
4 Igress  
5 Jaws  
6 Headings  
7 Come between  
17 Aquatic mammal  
18 Horse-drawn carriage  
19 Fabled vessel  
22 Devoured

25 Up-to-date  
26 Slight exchange  
27 Membership  
28 Puts on  
29 Laid slowly  
30 Eggs  
31 "Don't — on me!"  
32 Cookbook  
33 Panel  
34 Sarcasm  
35 Marriage announcement

36 Assist  
37 Gentleman's  
38 Division of  
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## Secret talks

(Continued from page 1)

should be given a genuine feeling that the process is enough deep and significant," Mr. Zvi-I said.

"That's exactly what (we) are trying to do in Paris, to reach a system on which we can ensure Israel's needs on security and give the Palestinians evidence of the political change. I hope we will succeed," he added.

Mr. Zvi-I, who is secretary-general of the Labour Party, said the meeting with Mr. Arafat was "very interesting." He said he was in Tunis on a "political personal visit" and insisted the negotiations were in France.

The Versailles negotiations, if they succeed, should lead to a meeting in the next few days between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin, opening the way for a global agreement on autonomy, sources said.

The talks were taking place at the luxury Trianon Palace hotel, the sixth floor of which has been taken over and is under heavy police guard, with journalists being kept out.

Some delegation members took a break in pouring rain in the nearby Versailles park and posed for press photographers.

The two sides are still at odds over the size of the area around Jericho that will fall under Palestinian control, the question of Jewish settlements in Jericho and the Gaza Strip as well as border crossings.

The Trianon Palace, which has one of the best restaurants in the Paris area, has often been used for secret negotiations. On Tuesday, French foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque said the French would give no information on the talks.

In the Trianon Palace are all the key figures involved in the secret negotiations last summer.

## Anti-Aideed clans vow to create government

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somali militias opposed to faction leader Mohammad Farah Aideed said Wednesday they would try to govern "with or without him."

But they left the door open for him to participate.

Aways Haji Yusef said the "group of 12," a loose alliance of factions linked to several Aideed's most bitter rival Ali Mahdi Mohammad, intended

to press ahead with the formation of a transitional national council (TNC) by January 15.

But Mr. Aways, Mr. Ali Mahdi's top adviser, said: "We don't want to form the TNC without him (Aideed). There is a seat on the council waiting for him. But we do not want him to hold the country to ransom."

"Everybody today wants no

more fighting and we have to take a most painful decision for Somalia to try and accommodate everyone."

Mr. Aways also predicted renewed clan fighting after the March withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Mr. Aways said the United Nations should never have lifted the order for Gen. Aideed's arrest issued after the

June 5 slaying of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers, allegedly by his militia.

Fighting between Mr. Ali Mahdi and Gen. Aideed over the mantle off dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, who was overthrown in January 1991, killed and maimed at least 30,000 people and completely destroyed the port capital of Mogadishu.

## GCC summit

(Continued from page 1)

welcomed a statement they said had been issued by the Tehran government calling for peaceful solution of the issue. Iraq's ruling party newspaper Al Thawra Wednesday attacked the summit as "fever-

ish hallucination."

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait refuses any dealings with Iraq while Saddam Hussein remains in power. They have lobbied permanent Security Council members to keep United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq in place.

On the Middle East peace pro-

cess, the GCC said it welcomed Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord as a "first step on the path to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement."

The final statement did not mention the GCC's position on a possible lifting of the Arab boycott of Israel.

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**Snap with Santa**  
Jolly Santa Claus is with us especially for the kids. Memorable photos can be taken in the lobby.  
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# IMF to help Russia cope with reform pain

WASHINGTON (R) — The IMF will send a team of experts to Moscow next month to help Russia rework its social safety net to assist the poor, the elderly and the unemployed cope with the pain of economic reform, a senior official said.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Deputy Director Ernesto Hernandez-Cata told Reuters that the team will provide Russia with advice and technical assistance on how best to proceed.

While the mission has been planned for some time, the visit is likely to be welcomed by critics calling for a shift in the IMF strategy for helping Russia following the strong showing by ultra-nationalists in parliamentary elections there this month.

The most prominent critic has been U.S. Vice President Al Gore. Worried that the ultra-nationalists have capitalised on voter ire over the economy, Mr. Gore has advocated an easing in the tough conditions for Russia that the IMF sets on its loans.

"The social impact has not been a prominent factor in the deliberations of the international financial institutions," a high U.S. administration official who accompanied Mr. Gore to Moscow last week said. "A better decision will be made if more consideration is given to the social impact."

The IMF has already lent Russia \$2.5 billion, but has held off from giving more until Russia takes further steps to reform and stabilise its economy.

Mr. Hernandez-Cata said that the IMF has been consistently stressing the need for Russia to restructure its social safety net since the fall of 1991.

In the middle of this year, the fund volunteered to help Russia with that task, he said. But the government of Russian President Boris Yeltsin was unable to take up that offer because the giant public pension fund there was beholden to the old Supreme Soviet (parliament) and refused to cooperate.

Mr. Yeltsin's move to do away with the old parliament in October and put his own man in charge of the pension fund opened the way for the fund mission next month.

Given its role as a monetary institution, the IMF would not be in a position to provide

money for a beefed-up social safety net. That would have to come from the United States and its rich allies, or from the World Bank.

The World Bank in November last year approved a \$70 million loan to assist Russia in setting up a social safety net.

Mr. Gore's sharp criticism of the IMF has sent ripples through the lending organisation and has even surprised some officials in the Clinton administration.

Washington apparently did not even raise the issue of altering IMF loan conditions when senior officials from rich industrial nations met last week to discuss aid for Russia.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen has called Mr. Gore's ideas for Russian loan terms interesting. But he pointedly stopped short of endorsing them.

Mr. Hernandez-Cata said the IMF was not out to hurt the poor by advocating tough economic reforms. It just wants Russia to do away with costly and inefficient subsidies and replace them with direct, up-front payments to the less well off.

"Our intention is not to deprive the poor," he said. "We want to do away with inefficient price subsidies and re-

place them with direct income transfers that are not distorted."

He said the poor and elderly suffer most from high inflation because they don't have the means to protect themselves. That means they would be helped by reforms such as those advocated by the IMF that are aimed at reining in price rises and stabilising the economy.

Meanwhile, U.S. experts are helping Russia to develop the commercial and legal infrastructure needed to improve its oil industry investment climate and create model companies.

The Russian fuel and energy ministry said: "The U.S. Energy Department and other U.S. government agencies are doing everything possible to obtain the private investment needed to finance a model (Russian) corporation under agreed conditions."

The Russian government is seeking to restructure its oil industry and inject new life into it by creating vertically integrated joint stock companies, each with production, refining and marketing operations.

The fuel and energy ministry said it would form a special group by mid-January to work on creating conditions to set up

a model corporation, including construction of Western-style petrol filling stations.

The group of Russian experts and ministry representatives would later visit the United States to hold talks with potential investors, it said.

The fuel and energy ministry said Moscow city authorities had approved eight possible sites for new filling stations.

A U.S.-Russian joint commission, which met in Moscow last week, called for approval of a new law on oil and gas that has been held up for months due to the conflict between President Yeltsin and the former Russian parliament.

Mr. Yeltsin disbanded the old parliament in September, then crushed armed resistance by its supporters on Oct. 4.

But the new legislature elected last week has strong conservatives and nationalists. It may be less receptive to foreign investments.

The law on oil and gas is expected to lay down the basic framework for investing in the sector, starved of cash for years and struggling to reverse steep oil output declines.

The U.S. and Russian sides set up three working groups to map out cooperation strategies, including measures to reduce fuel consumption.

## Cyprus tables '94 budget

NICOSIA (R) — The Cyprus economy is expected to grow by three per cent in 1994, compared to an estimated one per cent this year, Finance Minister Pheodosios Economides has said.

"I'm sure that with hard work better days will soon follow," he said while presenting the Mediterranean island's 1994 budget to the house of representatives.

The budget provides for net expenditure of 1.06 billion Cyprus pounds (\$2.12 billion) and net revenue of 815.2 mil-

lion Cyprus pounds (\$1.63 billion).

The revised budget for 1993 put expenditure at 929.9 million Cyprus pounds (\$1.86 billion) and revenue at 734 million Cyprus pounds (\$1.47 billion).

The fiscal deficit is expected to drop to 131.4 million Cyprus pounds (\$262.8 million) or 3.7 per cent of GDP from 157.4 million Cyprus pounds (\$314.8 million) or 4.8 per cent of GDP in 1993, Economides said.

The government raised value added tax from five to eight per cent in August.

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY DECEMBER 23, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

One of the best days this month to accomplish all the things you have left undone, as the Aries Moon trines both the Sun and Mars. Obstacles and delays won't deter your progress now so go for it.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are early in the mood to continue with the present festivities but you soon find that there are many things to be done so you can make consistent advancement towards routine goals.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can straighten out your surroundings and bring them to a new peak of perfection early in the day, later be off to some more pleasant times.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can make appointments for entertainments you want to have during the coming week in the morning, then get your home in good working condition.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your residence requires some special attention in the morning after which you can be off to the recreations that most appeal to you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Vital communications can be gotten out to everyone's satisfaction early in the day after which put your attention on arranging conditions at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Fix up your possessions

so they are more as you wish them to be in the morning, then you can get out and make calls, visits of importance to you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Pump and preen and get your beauty or charm more evident after which you will be able to get into the material matters of importance to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Private matters that you have held off doing in place yourself are fine in work out in the morning while later you can get out with good friends for recreation.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Contact as many good friends as possible for whatever good reason you have and get their support while later you can do some with loved one.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get out into the world and do whatever demands your best attention there and you achieve a great deal, then put efforts into more personal wishes.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Lots of new conditions you are interested in can be pushed this morning, so delve into them, then tonight results obtained in one in power.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your intuition, how best to get along with another person are excellent in the morning, after handling this be off with some new acquaintances.

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You have a good chance to gain the goodwill of others, especially those in positions of power and authority so attend to your special interests and enjoy additional health and vitality.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are not able to sit down with the "who attracts you the most and work out any problems confronting you so the future will be a happier time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your day for all association and partnership matters and by a truly cooperative attitude you are able to come to a very satisfactory understanding.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can not only put more operative skill into whatever your present interests but you are also able to beautify your surroundings greatly.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your day to decide the outlets which bring you the greatest amount of pleasure and making initial action in regularly enjoy them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Keep ahead of obligations at your residence by a more well organized arrangement so they are automatically completed without much ado, real pleasure.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make a special point to be with those outside with whom you have usual contact, let them

know you value their alliance and do something special for them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Now you see the best means by which you can have a greater abundance and to spare of whatever practical and material conditions you want in your life.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be just as personal as you want in letting whom ever can add you to gain your cherished longings and wishes just what they are and they become yours.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your day and evening to quietly plan just how you would like your life and activities to channel in the future and to make first preparations.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take your person's desires in the attention of a purposeful and experienced friend and get the assistance you desire in making it yours.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your day to iron out whatever links occur in your vocational activities in the world of activity and you can get help from highest boss.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be alert to all kinds of interesting and advanced means by which you will be able to expand your present interests far beyond what you have already.

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## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF

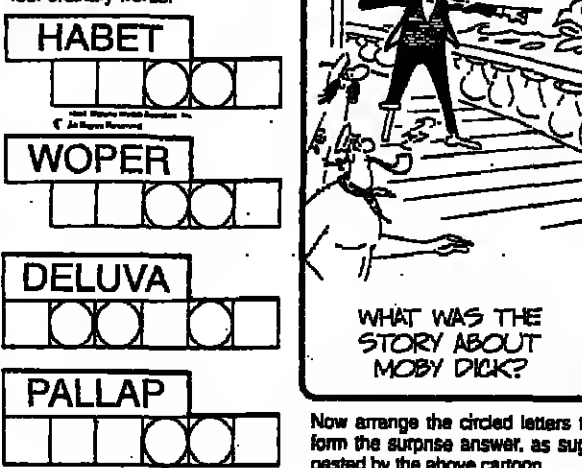
By Harris



"I hate to be vain, but do my teeth look like they've gained weight?"

## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

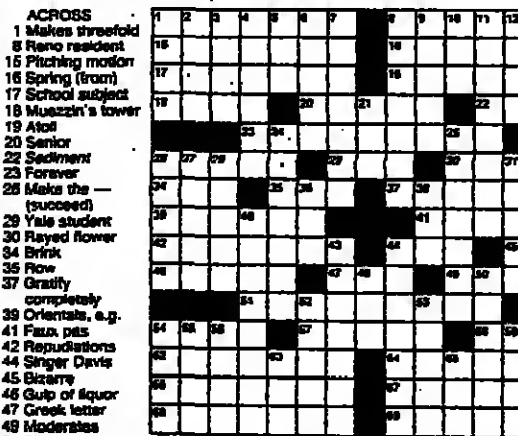


Answer here: A O O O O O O O O O

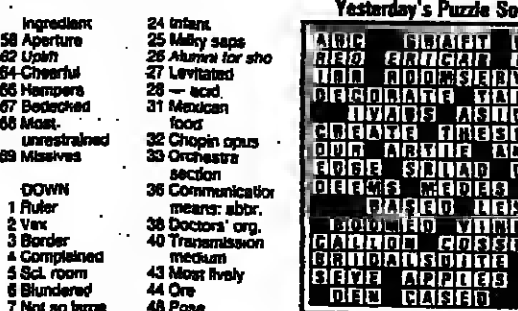
Saturday's Jumbles: CROON CYCLE FECOND DAHLIA  
Answer: How the French sometimes conduct negotiations — "FRANC-LY"

## THE Daily Crossword

by Kenneth V. Holden



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



61 Spreads grass clippings 62 Cooling drink 63 Drunkard



A black and white advertisement banner for KLM. On the left is the KLM logo with a crown above it. In the center, the word "EXOTIC" is in a serif font, and "AMSTERDAM" is in a large, bold, serif font. To the right of "EXOTIC" is a circular logo with the word "hit" inside. Below "AMSTERDAM", the text "KLM TICKET & 7 DAYS IN 5 STAR DELUXE HOTELS FOR JD 700" is written in a sans-serif font. At the bottom, "CALL HISHAM INTERNATIONAL TOURS Tel. 698180 / 698181" is written in a smaller sans-serif font. On the right side of the banner is a stylized illustration of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark dress, holding a large, round object, possibly a globe or a mirror, in front of her. In the background of the illustration is a windmill.



## Fighting rages in Sarajevo, central Bosnia; talks begin in Brussels

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The United Nations said Wednesday Serb gunners pounded Sarajevo and Muslim-led forces launched an offensive in central Bosnia as peace talks in Brussels offered some hope of a breakthrough.

While Bosnian rivals negotiated over a proposed peace map, Serb soldiers fired artillery rounds on the besieged Bosnian capital in the heaviest attack in two months, a U.N. spokesman in the city said Wednesday.

In central Bosnia, Muslim-led Bosnian army soldiers launched an artillery and infantry assault on Croats in central Bosnia near Vitez, U.N. officials and witnesses said.

Reuters journalists in the Croat-dominated walled town of Vitez said residents spotted Bosnian army troops moving towards Croat positions before dawn Wednesday, triggering fighting.

Doctors at nearby Nova Bila field hospital said one child had been killed by shrapnel and 28 people wounded, including 23 Croat soldiers.

United Nations observers recorded 1,500 shells landing in Sarajevo Tuesday and said 226 rounds hit the shell-shattered city overnight until 9 a.m. (0800 GMT) Wednesday.

Six were killed and 26 wounded in the capital in Tuesday's fighting, U.N. Major Ideshald Van Biesebroeck said.

At peace discussions in Brussels, international mediator Lord Owen said he was pushing for a settlement of the 20-month civil war by Christmas.

"We are absolutely determined if it is at all possible to reach a settlement before Christmas," Lord Owen told reporters.

Lord Owen, his fellow mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg and Serb, Croat and Muslim leaders flew from Geneva after talks Tuesday that focused on new Serb-Croat plans to partition Bosnia.

Although Bosnia's Muslims said in Geneva early Wednesday that they could not agree to the Serb-Croat plan, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Sacirbey, said the map was unacceptable but represented a sign of progress.

"We are certainly closer. We still have not managed to close

that final gap, but there is a real possibility that something positive could come out of all of this," Mr. Sacirbey said on British television.

Serbs were mainly responsible for the heavy shelling of Sarajevo Tuesday and Wednesday, Maj. Van Biesebroeck, a spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said.

"It was the heaviest level of shelling in the past two months. We can only assume they are trying to put pressure on the negotiations," he said.

Most of the shelling Tuesday occurred to the north and west of the city, in the suburbs of Zuc and Rajlovac. Shelling Wednesday morning centred again on Zuc, a desolate hill-top battlefield overlooking key roadways in and around the city.

Maj. Van Biesebroeck's regular morning press briefing was punctuated by the sound of regular explosions on nearby Zuc. Reporters leaving the U.N. compound could see shells slamming into a residential hillside less than 2,000 metres to the north.

Maj. Van Biesebroeck also expressed concern over Serb refusal to allow humanitarian

aid convoys to pass through their checkpoints on the way to civilians trapped by fighting.

He said the Serbs had stopped a convoy to the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde Tuesday and had turned around most of a convoy heading from Belgrade to Sarajevo.

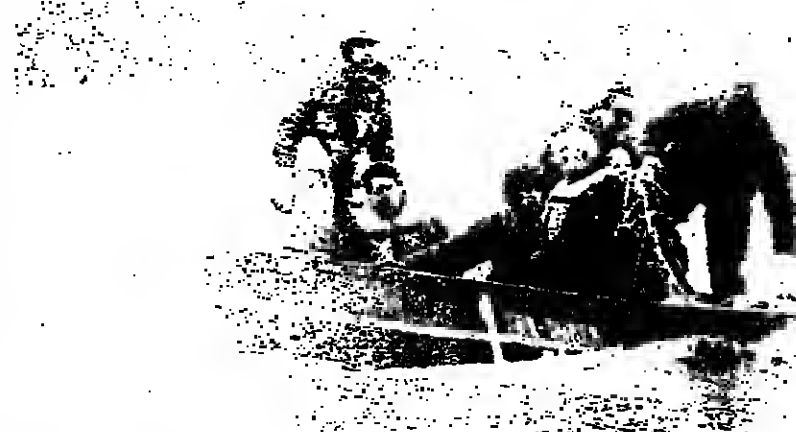
The European Community (EC) threatened Wednesday to tighten economic sanctions against Serbia unless the Serbs make territorial concessions to end the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The threat was made by Willy Claes, Belgian chairman of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers.

He was speaking during a meeting between EC foreign ministers and the leaders of the warring parties in Bosnia.

Mr. Claes also called for a Christmas truce, saying: "We dare to hope that Christmas will be marked by a cessation of hostilities and by a humanitarian truce, which could subsequently be consolidated."

He said the EC ministers intended to identify the parties holding up the peace process at the end of Wednesday's meeting if there was no breakthrough.



Inhabitants of the flooded village of Borgharen in the south of the Netherlands are evacuated from their homes (AFP photo)

## Floodwaters hit new levels in Europe

BONN (AFP) — Floodwaters have hit hard in at least four Western European countries after the worst rain in decades, leaving four dead in Germany where a sudden freeze could make things worse only a few days before Christmas.

Forecasts of more rain caused worries both there and in Belgium, the Netherlands and France after hundreds were evacuated or marooned on the upper floors of their homes awaiting rescue.

The Rhine and its tributaries hit record highs early Wednesday, flooding Heidelberg and Sarrebruck and threatening Cologne where it was rising eight centimetres (3.2 inches) an hour. Firemen feared Cologne's old town would be flooded by nightfall.

The B9 Highway between Bonn and Koblenz was closed at several points and shipping was stopped on the Rhine with no ferry crossings on the 60-kilometre (37-mile) stretch south of the capital where there are no bridges.

In the historic old town of Heidelberg, the Neckar River

was dropping after biting its high of the century overnight at 9.8-metre (more than 32 feet), forcing firemen to evacuate several people stranded in ground-floor apartments.

The Saar had risen to 9.2 metres (30 feet), nearly seven metres (23 feet) above its normal level, flooding several areas of Sarrebruck.

Bavaria in southern Germany was also under water with extensive damage reported in several cities and communications lines down.

On Tuesday, three motorists and a building worker were killed in gales and torrential rains in Germany.

In Belgium, tens of thousands of homes were flooded in a 50-kilometre (30-mile) strip along the border from the coast to Luxembourg, forcing hundreds to leave for dryer grounds. Roads were blocked and the canals swollen in picturesque Bruges, known as the Venice of the north.

Though water level along the southern strip were starting to drop Wednesday, the Meuse in eastern Belgium was rising

Wednesday four centimetres (1.6 inches) an hour, officials said.

On the Dutch side of the Meuse, about 30 of the worst-hit residents in the village of IJtteren were evacuated overnight, while five Dutch navy helicopters tried to reach others after strong currents swept a rescue hovercraft off track.

The 1,500 residents in IJtteren and three other nearby villages have been living in their upper stories for the last few days.

In Maastricht, water was 15 centimetres (about six inches) high on some streets though authorities said the situation was under control.

Flooding also hit several towns in northern France Wednesday, particularly along the Moselle in the northeast. Though many rivers were on the decline, more rain was expected during the day.

The worst hit was the Aisne Department where 170 patients had to be evacuated from a hospital in the Oise Valley.

## South African MPs pass new constitution

CAPE TOWN (AP) — The white-led parliament overwhelmingly approved a new constitution Wednesday giving blacks and whites equal rights for the first time.

The document, vehemently opposed by pro-apartheid white groups, replaces a constitution that for generations denied the black majority the right to vote, hold political office, or have any voice in national affairs.

"Now, for the first time, the future holds the promise of a brighter tomorrow," ANC President Nelson Mandela said in a written statement issued by ANC headquarters in Johannesburg. Mr. Mandela was en route to a Christmas vacation in the Bahamas.

President F.W. de Klerk's government and the African National Congress, the country's main black group, worked out the new constitution during two years of negotiations and heralded its approval. But right-wing whites warned of a violent backlash.

"This constitution is a monster," said the leader of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, Ferdi Hartzenberg, whose supporters stood up in parliament and sang the Afrikaner national anthem. Die Stem, just before the vote.

"Our liberation struggle will start and it will end in a success," he warned earlier.

The vote was 237 in favour and 45 opposed.

Shouts of anger erupted from the Conservatives' seats as they saw their efforts to force last-minute amendments to the document quashed. In addition to the conservatives, several white members of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the ANC's rival, opposed the constitution.

The groups, part of the anti-ANC Freedom Alliance, had sought changes that would have weakened the powers of the central government and allowed the possibility of a white homeland, or "Volkstaat," and autonomous regions.

The government and ANC held out the possibility the constitution could be amended early next year if their foes agree to recognise its legitimacy and participate in the country's first non-racial elections April 27.

Speaking Wednesday morning, Mr. Hartzenberg said the constitution could not bring peace because it did not satisfy groups represented by the Freedom Alliance.

"The fact that the Afrikaner nation, the Zulu nation and the Tswana nation are not accommodated means there is not a solution at this stage," he said. Afrikaners are descendants of the early white settlers, while Zulus and Tswanas are two of the country's major black tribes.

## Ghali voices deep concern over N. Korea

SEOUL (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Wednesday North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme could threaten not just regional security but also the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"I believe that this crisis is dangerous not only for the region here, but the way the crisis will be solved will have an impact on the renewal of the NPT in 1995 and all problems of proliferation," he told a Tokyo news conference before arriving in Seoul.

The secretary-general is in South Korea for an official visit prior to a "ground-breaking" trip across the cold war frontier for Christmas talks to Pyongyang on North Korea's nuclear intentions.

Dr. Ghali is to meet South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo later in the day and President Kim Young-Sam Thursday before heading

North to Pyongyang on Christmas Eve.

A South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said no specific topics had been fixed for the Seoul talks.

Dr. Ghali will be the first U.N. chief to enter Stalinist North Korea across the heavily-fortified inter-Korean border.

In Tokyo he said he did not have a mandate from the U.N. Security Council or any U.N. member state, including the United States, to negotiate with North Korea.

"This is a personal initiative," he said. "I will offer my good offices. I will make a goodwill visit to understand what the elements of the crisis are."

He said he was ready to convey any message from North Korea to the countries involved in the nuclear dispute.

The United States and other countries have accused North

Korea of secretly developing nuclear weapons.

The North flatly denied this, but it rattled the world in March by withdrawing from the nuclear safeguards treaty to avoid international inspection of two nuclear sites in Yongbyon, north of its capital Pyongyang.

The abrupt announcement raised fears it was developing nuclear weapons.

Pyeongyang later agreed to suspend its withdrawal after accepting high-level talks with Washington.

Although Dr. Ghali will be the first U.N. chief since 1979 to go to isolated North Korea, Pyongyang's official media have not mentioned his visit.

South Korea says it has proposed a meeting with Northern officials at the border hamlet of Panmunjom Thursday to discuss providing security and convenience for the cross-border trip, but it is still awaiting a response.

## Disabled girl gets wish... a day without teasing

FORT WAYNE, Indiana (AP) — Santa Claus brought her the doll she pined for. But it was Amy Hagadorn's classmates who gave the disabled third-grader her Christmas wish: A day without teasing.

Amy, who has cerebral palsy, confided her wish in a letter to Santa mailed to radio station WJLT-FM and read on the air last week. "I have a problem at school," she wrote in pencil. "Kids laugh at me because of the way I walk and run and talk. I have cerebral palsy. I just want one day where no one laughs at me or makes fun of me."

Last Friday, Amy's classmates at South Wayne Elementary School held a special day in her honour, granting her request, teacher Susan Danec said. The radio station, meanwhile, invited Amy to its broadcast Tuesday and arranged for Santa to drop by with the 3-foot-tall (1-metre) Barbie doll she wanted. Mayor Paul Helmke proclaimed Tuesday as Amy Hagadorn Day. "I think I had my Christmas today," a delighted Amy said.

Since Amy's letter was widely reported, the 9-year-old has gotten cards, letters, gifts and calls from as far away as England. In Kansas, residents of a group home for people with cerebral palsy want to become Amy's pen pals. A Toronto mother whose son was born with half a skull is sending a videotape on how children should act around people with disabilities. And a Tennessee woman said she planned to use Amy's story in her Sunday school class. "This has been great for her, and for her self-esteem," Amy's mother, Patti, said. It's touched the lives of so many. ... The response has been overwhelming. In fact, that Mrs. Hagadorn and her husband, Jim, worry that the outpouring may obscure the broader message in Amy's letter. All people should be treated with compassion.

## Italian movie remains banned in N. Zealand

WELLINGTON (AFP) — A 17-year-old ban on an Italian film lifted failed Wednesday after viewers at a special screening in Wellington decided the movie was "repellent."

Salò: 120 Days Of Sodom was the last film made by Italian film director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Made in 1975, it is set in the Nazi-occupied town of Salò, Italy, in 1944 and is an attack on fascism. In it, four dignitaries organise mass arrests of the town's youth, who are then subjected to sadistic sexual torture and murdered. The film was previously rejected for screening by the film censors in 1976. The application to have the film reclassified was made by Australian distribution company Premium Films. A special screening was held last week for 24 members of the public, including representative of Women Against Pornography, the National Council of Women, the Commissioner For Children, Victoria University's Italian Department, a police psychologist, film-makers and film reviewers.

Chief film censor Jane Wrightson's report said all at the screening described the film as "repellent," the unanimous decision of the film censors office was to keep the ban. "In essence, the artistic and cultural elements, while undeniably present, do not sufficiently outweigh the other criteria in order that classification becomes a realistic option," the report said.

## So much bitterness over sweet honey

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Chinese honey, which met about one fifth of U.S. demand for the sweetened last year, is jeopardising U.S. beekeepers' businesses, the U.S. international trade commission said Tuesday. Imports of honey from China are surging and disrupting the U.S. market, the announcement charged, without giving figures other than last year's. Chinese shipments of honey last year — some of it blends of natural and artificial honey — were worth \$26.1 million. U.S. consumers bought 135.4 million kilos (298.5 million pounds) of honey in 1992, 52 million kilos (114.6 million pounds) of which was shipped from other countries. The commission scheduled a public meeting on the honey issue for Jan. 4. It will recommend to President Bill Clinton three days later whether to slap a new import duty on Chinese honey, or to restrict imports in another way.

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## Allegations on Clinton draw growing media attention

WASHINGTON (R) — New allegations of marital infidelities by President Bill Clinton has picked up pace.

The allegations about Mr. Clinton's womanising, first published by a small conservative magazine Sunday, caught fire, leading network news broadcast and winning front-page coverage in major newspapers.

"The most important thing is that the story has legs," said political commentator Mark Shields in a discussion of the issue on the Public Television Service's McNeil/Lehrer News-hour.

On the same programme, analyst Linda Chavez said the scandal was about "sex, lies and telephone calls."

It was not immediately clear how the scandal would affect Mr. Clinton, who had seen his public approval ratings rise sharply in the past two weeks following good economic news and some prominent foreign successes, including the negotiation of a new global trade pact.

The allegations came from Roger Perry and Larry Patterson, two Arkansas state troopers who provided security for Mr. Clinton when he was governor.

They alleged having driven him to secret sex assignments with several women, lining up women for him, booking hotel rooms and lying about her husband's whereabouts to Hillary Rodham Clinton. They said this behaviour even continued after Mr. Clinton was elected president in November 1992.

"We were more than bodyguards. We had to lie, cheat

and cover up for that man," Mr. Patterson, who spent five years as a Clinton security person, was quoted by the Los Angeles Times as saying.

Leonard Downie Jr., executive editor of the Washington Post, which reported the allegations on its front page Tuesday, said: "Extramarital affairs is not the subject of our reporting. The subject of our reporting is the question of whether or not Bill Clinton, as governor and now as president, has in any way used government resources and power in any connection with his private life that would be improper."

Mr. Clinton himself has not responded to the charges but White House officials insist there is nothing new in them that did not emerge during the presidential campaign.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, in an interview with Reuters Tuesday, said the allegations were financially and politically motivated and would "end up in the garbage can."

"My husband's presidency speaks for itself, and what he has done in just one year for America... ultimately, that's how the American people are going to judge, not some story that somebody promotes for their own financial gain or because they have a political vendetta," she said.

Complicating the picture was the disclosure that Mr. Clinton, apparently aware that such stories might emerge, had called several Arkansas state troopers in an effort to persuade them to keep quiet.

The charges have rekindled a controversy about Mr. Clinton's alleged womanising that dogged him in last year's campaign.

Gennifer Flowers, a one-time cabaret singer and Arkansas state employee, sparked the controversy early in Mr. Clinton's turbulent race for the presidency by alleging she had had an adulterous relationship with Mr. Clinton. She is the only woman to make such a claim.

The latest flare-up, coupled with fresh questions being raised about Mr. Clinton's financial dealings with a failed Arkansas savings and loan institution while he was governor, are apparently not something that could drive Mr. Clinton from office.

They have, however, threatened to stall his new-found momentum.

Mrs. Clinton, looking back on her family's turbulent first year in the White House, said Tuesday the biggest adjustment to presidential life was "learning what a big state this really is."

"I was gratified to learn that no one who's ever been here feels like they were fully prepared," she said. "Getting used to the expectations, those were things that we really valued and worked hard on."

The first lady's comments came as President Clinton struggled to extinguish a political firestorm sparked by the renewed charges of womanising.

As she did in a now-famous CBS "60 Minutes" television interview after the Gennifer Flowers controversy burst into the headlines during the 1992 presidential race, Mrs. Clinton

offered an unstinting defence of her mate of 18 years.

Mrs. Clinton, in a bright red jacket and black slacks, was cheerful and friendly during the 20-minute interview with Reuters. It took place in the diplomatic reception room, a small salon in the residential part of the White House.

While the interview touched on the charges of two former bodyguards who claim they helped facilitate trysts for the president when he was governor, the main focus was on how the Clinton family has adjusted to Washington.

Asked what was the hardest part of it, Mrs. Clinton said: "Learning about what a big stage this really is."

But she said her greatest satisfaction was "that my family has gotten settled in here," and that her husband's first-year accomplishments on the economic front "are being appreciated by the American people."

When a reporter suggested that the Clintons' long working hours were burdensome, Mrs. Clinton replied with a half-sigh "yeah," but said that in some ways it was easier for her and her husband and 13-year-old daughter to have a personal life in the White House.

"It's like living above the store because in many ways the fact that the president's office is just down the corridor means that he's home for dinner more, means that Chelsea can run over there to have him help with her homework, means that we can see each other during the day," she said.

As she did in a now-famous CBS "60 Minutes" television interview after the Gennifer Flowers controversy burst into the headlines during the 1992 presidential race, Mrs. Clinton



## Jordan basketball season nears end

By Aileen Baniyayan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Less than a week remains for the 1993 basketball season to be completed, giving fans and players a brief break before the Jordan Basketball Federation issues the 1994 calendar of events.

In the final week of action three matches are scheduled for Friday, the most interesting of which is the Watan-Husseini clash in which Al Hussein will try to avenge their first round 80-78 loss to Al Watan in double overtime.

Al Hussein this year ceded fifth place to Al Watan secured their position an unexpected 83-80 win over Al Jalil.

Al Watan lately beat Al Wifaq 71-37 and will now seek to score a second victory over

Al Hussein to challenge Al Jalil for fourth place. However they will have to score a big victory over Al Hussein to accomplish that ambition.

In another match Al Ashrafieh, who lost 86-51 to Al Hussein in their latest match, will face third-place Al Jazireh.

Al Jazireh had won their first round encounter 103-47 against Al Ashrafieh and are expected to repeat an easy victory over the newcomers who have already been relegated.

In the third match of the day, winless Al Wifaq will take on fourth-placed Al Jalil who lately lost 112-51 to former champions Al Orthodoxi.

During the first round Al Jalil had scored a 105-40 victory over Al Wifaq who have joined Al Ashrafieh on their

way back to the second division.

The only unbeaten team, titleholders Al Ahli, have no matches prior to their much-anticipated clash with al-time rivals Al Orthodoxi on Dec. 29.

They beat Al Jazireh 88-54 in the final rehearsal for the match and title of the year.

Al Orthodoxi whose only loss was 70-60 to Al Ahli in the first round final, are scheduled to meet Al Wifaq in a postponed match on Dec. 27.

### Standings

Team	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Al Ahli	13	13	—	1307	608	26
Orthodoxi	12	11	1	1170	716	23
Jazireh	13	9	4	1015	894	22
Jalil	13	6	7	992	919	19
Watan	13	6	7	841	984	19
Husseini	13	4	9	931	1005	17
Ashrafieh	13	2	11	626	1199	15
Wifaq	12	—	12	486	1045	12

\*Al Orthodoxi and Al Wifaq have a postponed match.

## Trinkl wins super-G from way back

LECH, Austria (Agencies) — Austrian Hannes Trinkl left the big names of Alpine skiing trailing in a super-G Wednesday — his first World Cup win.

Trinkl, among the unfancied runners with start number 51, shot down the 1.7 kms Kriegerhorn Piste in one minute 4.42 seconds.

A surprise was on the cards when another late starter, Italy's Werner Oerthofer, had set the pace with 1:05.02 from 41st place in the order. Trinkl nudged him into second place.

Driving snow and a steady wind eased after the first 15 minutes of the race, favouring competitors like Trinkl as he attacked the 30 gates of the 460 metres drop.

Norway's Kjetil Andre Aamodt came eighth and gained first place in the overall championship from absent Italian showman Alberto Tomba.

Trinkl's previous best World Cup effort was third places in two downhill last season.

The result made up for the disappointing performance of Lech-born Olympic champion Patrick Ortlieb, who made a major error seconds after leaving the start and failed to finish. Ortlieb was suffering from influenza and spent Tuesday in bed.

Reigning overall champion Marc Girardelli had to settle for fifth place.

Katja catches them hopping

Meanwhile Katja Koren of Slovenia gate-crashed the party in Flachau, Austria Wednesday to win her first World Cup.

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Katja catches them hopping

Meanwhile Katja Koren of Slovenia gate-crashed the party in Flachau, Austria Wednesday to win her first World Cup.

race in the women's super giant slalom.

She won the last race before the Christmas break in Lienz, 15.62sec. to deny Bibiana Perez of Italy and world champion Katja Seizinger of Germany.

Perez thought here 1:15.70 was good enough to clinch her first win while Seizinger was seeking her first win this season.

The 21-year-old German timed 1:15.87 for the bumpy course which was turned into an icer run by Tuesday's rain.

However the course became easier as the day wore on and the sun got to work.

Sweden's 1988 Olympic champion Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden, who went 21st, just after Perez, eventually finished sixth.

Morena Gallizio of Italy and Alenka Dovzan of Slovakia, two other late starters, leapfrogged her.

Austria's Anita Wachter finished 15th and saw her World Cup lead over Elberg cut to 14 points.

Canada's world downhill champion Kate Pace was fastest through the first intermediate section before skiing off.

The North American skiers were unhappy when Tuesday's race was postponed because they were unsure about rearranging their flights back home for Christmas.

"Before the start I heard my teammate Alenka Dovzan had had a really good run," Koran said. "That I started to believe I could go all the way."

## Kevin Keegan joins front runners for England job

LONDON (AFP) — Kevin Keegan joined Terry Venables and Howard Kendall among the front runners for the vacant England manager's job Wednesday after a dramatic change of heart by Newcastle Chairman Sir John Hall.

Until now, Sir John had ruled out releasing Keegan from his new three-year contract as Newcastle manager.

However, the St James' Park Chairman indicated Wednesday that he would not be against the former England skipper helping the national side on a part-time basis.

"My first job is to Newcastle United, but at the same time I have to be a chairman who is responsible for the England team and I'm not against helping out if at all possible," he said.

"Kevin Keegan cannot be released on a full-time basis, but I'm not against helping England if they come up with any other formula."

"I've been criticised in the past for saying I would not help

England, but that has never been the situation."

Jimmy Armfield, appointed by the Football Association to headhunt for a successor to Graham Taylor, welcomed Sir John's comments, as he has always been a fan of Keegan.

"It's the first I've heard of this, but that response is exactly what I've wanted to hear — to be prepared to help England is what I want from any club," he said.

But Armfield admitted that the idea of a part-time appointment had not been considered.

"With regard to Kevin Keegan, it's the first I've thought about it," he added. "I hadn't really thought about anyone on a part-time basis to be honest."

"This is completely new and I would have to talk to the rest of the committee and the chairman, and see if there's going to be any change."

"If there's going to be any approach, it would be from the chairman of the FA direct to Sir John."

## Agassi out of Australian Open

SYDNEY (AFP) — Andre Agassi has scuttled organisers' hope of his long-awaited debut at the Australian Open by announcing his withdrawal from the year's opening tennis Grand Slam.

Last year's Wimbledon champion announced through the International Management Group (IMG) here he had a wrist operation early this week and would be out of action for up to a month.

The 23-year-old American, one of few modern-day tennis players with crowd-pulling appeal, has yet to play in the Australian Open last year he cried off with an attack of tennisitis.

Richard Krajicek might also be forced to pull out after recent knee surgery although the Dutchman had not been in touch with organisers.

IMG Vice-President Graeme Hannan said Agassi's niggling wrist injury had not responded to cortisone injections over the last few weeks.

Hannan said Agassi had trained hard but when the cortisone wore off the pain intensified and on medical advice he was operated on in a Californian hospital Monday.

"He will not look at a tennis racket for another three or four weeks and it will probably be March before he is playing competitively again," Hannan said.

Australian Open General Manager Jim Reid said from Melbourne it was unfortunate the Australian Open had lost such a personality player.

"It's very sad for the Australian public who were working forward to seeing him here for the first time, but we weren't sure how many rounds he would have got through because of the state of his fitness in recent months," Reid said.

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## Baggio set to follow the greats

ROME (R) — Roberto Baggio will take his place among the greats if he is named European Footballer of the Year as widely expected Sunday.

Baggio, 26, whose film-star good looks, distinctive pony-tail and sublime skills have made him one of the biggest stars in world football today, is hot favourite to take the award and follow the likes of Stanley Matthews, Alfredo Di Stefano, Johan Cruyff, Michel Platini, Raul Gullit and Marco Van Basten into European soccer's hall of fame.

These are heady days for the attacking utility player who has at last lived up to all his early promise and is now justifying every cent of the 13 million that Juventus paid Fiorentina for his services in 1990 and what was then a world record transfer fee.

In May he helped Juventus win the UEFA Cup — the first major honour of his career. Last week he was named by national coaches polled by the International Football Federation (IFFA) as the world's best player.

Next year he could be the man to lead Italy to an unprecedented fourth World Cup final victory.

Not bad for someone once dubbed a loser a man who is a practising Buddhist and a man who has come back three times from serious injury to build a career at the highest level.

Baggio, deadly from set pieces and a fine passer and dribbler of the ball, already has great responsibility on his slim shoulders as soccer-crazy Italians look to him as the spearhead of their country's assault on the World Cup.

He will doubtless fall back on Buddhist forms of meditation to help ease the pressure of a competition which comes at a time when his wife is due to have their second child.

Baggio spoke about his conversion to the eastern faith during a recent television programme centred on the hit film Little Buddha by Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci.

"I was playing for Fiorentina at the time and had just suffered a serious injury. I needed something deeper than the Catholic religion," he said.

"Today Buddhism helps me control my mind better," added Baggio who first came to international prominence shortly before the 1990 World Cup when Juventus signed him from arch-rivals Fiorentina.

The volatile Fiorentina fans

rioted for several nights in protest while Baggio proved his class with one of the best goals of the World Cup — a superb solo run and chip over Czechoslovak goalkeeper Jan Stejskal.

However, Baggio was not a regular in the Italian side for a World Cup which ended with the disappointment of semifinal elimination for the nation.

His first season at Juventus was equally calamitous with Italy's most successful club failing to qualify for European competition for the first time in almost 30 years.

Further disappointment followed the next year when Juventus finished league runners-up to AC Milan and lost the Italian Cup final to Parma.

Questions were asked about Baggio's character and as little as 12 months ago tough Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni

was openly wondering whether his captain was a true leader. Baggio finally silenced his critics with match-winning performances to help Juventus beat Paris St. Germain in the UEFA Cup semifinal and overpower Borussia Dortmund in the final — netting five times in the final rounds.

He also emerged as the key player as Italy qualified for the World Cup, scoring five times to take his tally to 19 goals in 32 internationals while his nimble feet and quick brain also make him the main creator for the Italians.

"It's amazing how much he has matured over the past 12 months, how much more of a team player he has become," national coach Arrigo Sacchi said.

Questions were asked about Baggio's character and as little as 12 months ago tough Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni




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Wishing you all Merry X-mas and Happy New Year

<p><b>TODAY</b></p> <p>Cinema Tel.: 634144</p> <p><b>PHILADELPHIA</b></p> <p>Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30, 12:30</p> <p><b>NINJA DRAGONS</b></p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 677420</p> <p><b>CONCORD</b></p> <p><b>CONCORD "1"</b></p> <p>Beauty and the Beast</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p><b>CONCORD "2"</b></p> <p>Dancing Heavenly Bodies</p> <p>Shows: 3:15, 6, 8:15, 10:15</p> <p><b>Hi America Play</b> Shows: 8:30</p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 699238</p> <p><b>PLAZA</b></p> <p>Ahmad Zaki and Mahmoud Hamidah in</p> <p><b>AL BASHA (ARABIC)</b></p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Tel.: 675571</p> <p><b>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</b></p> <p>presents a play entitled:</p> <p><b>Al ilm Nuron</b></p> <p>A popular political comedy</p> <p>Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shear, Foad Shomail</p> <p>In addition to other comedians</p> <p>Every night at 8:15</p> <p>Tickets are sold all day</p>	<p>Nabil &amp; Hisham's Tel.: 625159</p> <p><b>AHLAN THEATRE</b></p> <p>The political comedy</p> <p><b>WELCOME ARAB SUMMIT</b></p> <p>Daily 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday</p> <p>English synopsis available</p> <p>The Theatre will be closed from Dec. 24, 1993 until further notice.</p>
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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## PFLP denies its leaders backing accord

DAMASCUS (R) — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Wednesday denied a report saying some of its leaders broke ranks with the group and supported the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreement. The PFLP said in a statement a report by Israeli Television on Dec. 20 saying the PFLP leaders were also ready to join units of the Palestinian police "are baseless and are aimed at creating rifts among the PFLP members and its supporters." The PFLP is headed by George Habash who is leading a 10-member alliance which vowed to foil the Gaza-Jericho agreement. "We wish to confirm that comrades Jalal Hafez Azeza, Nasser Abu Aziz and others whose names were mentioned by the enemy's television are still committed to the PFLP's policy which totally rejected the accord," the statement said. "We challenge the enemy to give any practical evidence to prove its claims which are only aimed at negatively affecting the front's position and its importance as a leading opponent of the accord," it added. The PFLP said Mr. Azeza and Mr. Abu Aziz were expelled from the occupied territories in 1986 and both were still living in exile. It did not say where.

## Kuwaiti paper slams Zhirnovsky remarks

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti newspaper on Wednesday slammed Russia's right-wing politician Vladimir Zhirnovsky over remarks he made backing Iraq's claim in Kuwait. "Mind your country's problems and let Kuwait handle its affairs," Al Anba newspaper said in its editorial. Mr. Zhirnovsky said in an interview with the London-based Sunday Times that he believed Kuwait belongs to Iraq and that it should be under Baghdad's rule. Iraq does not accept its current borders with Kuwait, which were drawn up after a U.S.-led military coalition ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of the emirate in 1991. The paper expressed concerns over the possibility that Mr. Zhirnovsky might "spread his black plague" if he came to rule Russia especially since recent elections indicated that he was close to the seat of power.

## Monkeys create havoc in Cairo Airport

CAIRO (AP) — Two small monkeys that arrived from Sudan with an Egyptian passenger escaped from their cages Wednesday, leaping and swinging through parts of Cairo international airport until they were caught by 15 firemen. The monkeys fled when a customs officer opened the cages to examine them after they arrived on a Lufthansa plane from Khartoum, airport officials said. They were among a group of four monkeys brought to Cairo for use in cancer research. Airport employees chased them through the luggage area but were too match for their speed. Firemen and police rushed in with ladders and nets as the monkeys swung from the ceiling beams, said Nader Takla, a Lufthansa official. "We were totally unprepared for anything like this, no masks or gloves to catch the animals with," he said. The animals were caught three hours later. "While playing, they fell in a narrow spot" and firemen managed to fling nets over the animals, Mr. Takla said.

## Israeli army chief visits France

PARIS (R) — The chief of staff of Israel's armed forces is in France for the first official visit since 1957, French and Israeli officials said on Wednesday. They said Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak, who arrived last week, discussed the Middle East situation with Defence Minister Francois Leotard and French military chiefs. Israeli officials said the visit aimed to underline the resumption of good relations following a long period of coolness after France put an arms embargo on Israel at the onset of the 1967 Middle East war. Mr. Leotard is to visit Israel soon. The last official visit to France by an Israeli chief of staff was by the late Moshe Dayan in 1957.

## Fifteen criminals hanged in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Fifteen people convicted of rape and murder were hanged in Iran recently, the Kayhan newspaper reported here Wednesday. Head of the supreme court Mohammad Moghtadai, quoted by the newspaper, said 10 of those executed were members of a gang of 30 who carried out murders, rapes and burglaries in the Tehran area, while five others committed similar crimes in the Qom region, 150 kilometres south of the capital. Four of the criminals were hanged in public in the presence of their victims' families, according to Kayhan. Mr. Moghtadai said the criminals in the Tehran area set up roadblocks and extorted money from travellers. They also raided houses at night and committed rape after tying up their victims' hands and feet, he said.

## Kuwait estimates war damage at \$170b

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait estimates its losses from the Iraqi occupation at more than \$170 billion and the government will make its first financial claim against Baghdad before the end of the year, a senior official said Wednesday. Most of the losses were suffered by the government and the oil sector, Adel Assem, director of the government body responsible for assessing damages, told the Associated Press. He said a claim for \$500 million would be filed with the U.N. compensation commission next week. The first government claim covers part of the costs of the emergency recovery plan that returned basic services to the country after the seven-month Iraqi occupation. The remainder of the claims covering government losses must be filed with the world body by the end of April. Mr. Assem said the \$170 billion did not include damages to the environment, such as possible damages to the natural oil reservoirs caused by hundreds of oil well fires.

## Christian cemetery desecrated in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Christian cemetery and a chapel have been desecrated in the first such incident in Lebanon for several years, a Christian cleric said on Wednesday. A Maronite Christian chapel was damaged last week and marble and wooden crosses smashed at a Greek Orthodox and Maronite cemetery in Mansourieh, a Christian mountain village, said the cleric who declined to be identified. Some residents in the village overlooking east Beirut said they suspected the acts involved rival Christian groups. The desecration of Christian and Muslim cemeteries was widespread during the 15-year civil war in Lebanon which ended in 1990.

## Jordan is committed to improving children's life

World report gives high marks to Kingdom

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan Wednesday pledged commitment to enhancing the well-being of children, and promised to ensure them a better future despite unemployment and poverty.

"Jordanian commitment to the rights and well-being of children was reflected in the national conference for children last year and in this year's Jordanian plan of action for maternal and child well-being until the year 2000," Her Majesty Queen Noor said in an opening speech on the occasion of the launching of two United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports.

"I look forward to continuing to follow up the implementation in Jordan of commitments made at the World Summit for Children in 1990 through a task force that we are establishing to monitor the well-being of children and their families," the Queen said at the ceremony held at the Royal Cultural Centre.

The two reports, State of the World's Children 1994 and the Progress of Nations 1993, clearly demonstrated that "much had been done... but much more can be achieved if there is peace and cooperation in the region," according to Sarojini Vitarachi, UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa.

According to Mrs. Vitarachi, annual child deaths from measles have dropped down from 2.5 million in the 1980s to one million today, and female literacy improved from 19 per cent in 1970 to 46 per cent in 1990.

The goals for the year 2000, as set by UNICEF's State of the World Children, include control of the major childhood diseases, a halving of child malnutrition, safe water for all communities, basic health care and education for all children, and universal available family planning services.

Most developing countries are trying to reach some of the goals by the end of 1995, including a 95 per cent reduction in measles deaths, the elimination of neonatal tetanus, an 80 per cent use rate for the oral rehydration technique that can prevent most deaths from diarrhoeal diseases, the eradication of polio in certain countries, and an end to the disabilities caused by micronutrient deficiencies.

Jordan was among the many countries that ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child that was adopted in November 1989, and was among the some countries who have actually finalised a national programme of action for reaching the year 2000 goals, a commitment agreed upon by the world leaders at the 1990 World Summit for Children.

The total cost of these programmes allocated for children, according to Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz, is estimated at JD 136 million; the governmental sector is expected to contribute about JD 69.1 million while JD 34.5 million will be contributed from the voluntary and charitable societies and the private sector's share in these programmes is estimated at JD 25.4 million.

"We think that these goals are achievable... we hope to achieve more," Dr. Fariz said at a press conference following the inauguration.

The Progress of Nations report figures show that child nutrition levels in Jordan, along with those of Kuwait, are the best in the Middle East and North Africa region and rank third among all developing countries.

Only six per cent of Jordanian children are malnourished, compared with a regional average of 24 per cent and a developing world average of 36 per cent.

Using data from all nations, UNICEF has calculated how many children on average survive to their fifth birthday, reach the fifth year at school and have an adequate nutrition in relation to their country's economic level. By comparing these key statistics with the average for countries at similar levels of gross national product, UNICEF has identified national performance gaps above or below expectations.

Jordan's performance on nutrition is rated "plus 7," meaning that a child malnutrition rate of 13 per cent rather than the actual six per cent could have been expected for a country with Jordan's per capita income (\$1,120 in 1991).

The report shows that Jordan is among 20 countries that halved child death rates during the 1980s. Also, a remarkable 92 per cent of Jordanian children reach at least the fifth level of primary school, an achievement surpassed only by just nine developing countries.

Although Jordan is one of the world's 20 fastest-growing countries, it is also one of the 21 countries where births per woman have fallen by at least one child in the past decade. In 1980, the average family size in Jordan was 7.1 children. At present, Jordanian women have an average of 5.8 children.

"I would like to commend the government agencies and officials, NGOs and private organisations that have contributed to the well-being of our families and our children," Queen Noor said. "We also remain grateful to UNICEF for their assistance, professionalism, and partnership with the people of Jordan... together we will continue to protect women and children; to nurture healthy, productive families; to promote stable and humane societies; and to honour the dignity of life itself."

The Jordanian government has delayed its implementation.

Mr. Gammo told Jordanian businessmen on Tuesday that it was not as much an IMF demand than a pressing need for Jordan to revamp its taxation system that was behind the move to replace the consumption tax, effective since last year, with a sales tax.

The minister also countered arguments that the sales tax would lead to higher prices. He said in theory the new tax was only replacing the consumption tax already in force, and a hike in some of the rates of the levy would affect only luxury items.

The sales tax ranges between five and 20 per cent depending on the nature of the product.

Mr. Gammo also promised businessmen Monday the draft law would not be sent to Parliament without further consultations with the business community.

He said while the move was indeed a measure included in Jordan's economic restructuring programme it was also part of the changes the Kingdom's economy has to undergo towards improvement.

AMMAN — The government hopes to finalise a stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before the end of the year clearing the way for the Kingdom's efforts to reschedule its foreign debts, Finance Minister Sami Gammo said Wednesday.

Mr. Gammo confirmed that technical experts from the two sides were already at work finalising the document, which will be effective until Dec. 31, 1994.

Under the agreement, Jordan will undertake to replace the consumption tax with a sales tax on most items, excluding basic food items, medicine and educational material.

The introduction of sales tax, which has drawn fierce opposition from the business community saying the levy will lead to higher prices for the consumer, has been one of the measures that the government was supposed to have taken during 1993, but political considerations by some members of the Cabinet in an election year

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## Yeltsin pledges continued reform

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin promised Wednesday to keep Russia moving towards a free market despite the surprise victory of "primitive nationalism" in parliamentary elections.

In his first major response to the elections, Mr. Yeltsin told a Kremlin news conference that "the limit to the people's patience has nearly been reached" after two years of painful economic reforms.

But Mr. Yeltsin promised that Economics Minister Yegor Gaidar, the architect of the reforms, would remain in office. "That means that the course he is following will continue," Mr. Yeltsin said.

He added, however, that the government would greatly step up its efforts to help the poor, unemployed and others hurt by the transition from communism to capitalism.

Mr. Yeltsin took a confident, upbeat tone at the hour-long news conference, his first attempt to explain the Dec. 12 elections, in which an ultra-nationalist party was the top

vote-getter. "Throughout the election campaign, wide use was made of demagoguery, preaching of primitive nationalism, outright lies and even dangerous provocations," he said. "Unfortunately a substantial part of the electorate is still too trusting of reckless promises."

Mr. Yeltsin hinted at a softening of the radical International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved policies espoused by Mr. Gaidar, as first deputy prime minister, saying his government must balance the need to control inflation with the need to help the poor.

"If inflation continues to go down as it did in November we will change our social policy substantially from the point of view of the volume of social benefits offered to our people from the budget," he said.

Increased social spending to soften the harsh effects of Mr. Gaidar's tight monetarist policies formed a major plank of conservative election platforms.

## Libya holds memorial for its air crash victims

CAIRO (Agencies) — Libya held a memorial service Wednesday to mark the first anniversary of the crash of a Libyan passenger jet that the government blames on U.N. sanctions.

The Libyan Arab Airline Boeing 727 jet crashed a year ago near Tripoli on a flight from the coastal city of Benghazi. All 157 passengers and crew were killed.

The government has blamed the crash on the sanctions, saying these prevented getting needed spare parts for aircraft. It said the flight number was 1103, ironically similar to Pan Am Flight 103 that prompted the sanctions.

The U.N. Security Council imposed air, arms and diplomatic sanctions in April 1992 to try to force Libya to surrender two nationals wanted for the 1988 bombing of the Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people.

A memorial service marking the fifth anniversary of the Pan Am disaster was held Tuesday in Lockerbie (see page 2).

Libya's official JANA news agency, monitored in Cairo, said Wednesday that families of the Libya crash victims attended a graveside ceremony to commemorate those who died "as a result of the unjust, unfounded resolutions issued by a group of colonialist countries under the cover of the Security Council."

The United States and Britain sponsored the sanctions motion, along with France which is seeking four Libyans for questioning in connection with the crash of a UTA passenger jetliner over Niger in 1989.

The three oil-rich nations won Security Council approval to expand the sanctions Dec. 1 to include a ban on the sale of oil equipment to Libya and a freeze on some foreign assets.

## Jordan expects IMF accord before end of year

Introduction of sales tax is major undertaking

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

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Sami Gammo

ving itself and recovering from the blows it suffered as a result of the foreign debt crisis in 1988-89 and the 1990-Gulf crisis.

Mr. Gammo told the Jordan Times Wednesday that there was no other major measure that Jordan was supposed to introduce during 1994 under the standby agreement with the IMF.

"The sales tax is the main item in the (stand-by) agreement with the IMF," Mr. Gammo told the Jordan

Times. "We hope to finalise the draft before the end of the year."

Economic experts and diplomatic sources familiar with the Jordan-IMF discussions said the international financial watchdog was largely satisfied with the Kingdom's adherence to the economic restructuring programme.

They said the stand-by agreement would not face any major hurdle in clearing itself through the IMF board of governors. Such clearance will open the door for Jordan to launch fresh debt rescheduling agreements with the Paris Club of creditor governments and allow the Kingdom access to up to \$80 million in a World Bank loan to improve its water sector.

The experts said the IMF, which has been pressing Jordan to reduce food subsidies, was also satisfied with the Kingdom's slashing of JD 6 million in subsidies allocated in the 1994 fiscal budget, which is now before Parliament.

Jordan plans to launch debt rescheduling talks with the Paris Club in February but an IMF certification that the Kingdom is abiding by

the economic restructuring programme is essential before the talks could start.

Mr. Gammo was quoted as saying Tuesday that Jordan had bought back \$45 million of its official debt from Brazil at a 50 per cent discount.

"We recently bought back \$45 million of the official Brazilian debt as a means to reduce our external debt burden," Mr. Gammo was quoted as saying by Reuters.

The Kingdom's total foreign debt stands at \$6.87 billion after deducting \$673 million in repayments on principal and interest in 1993 excluding funds used to buy back debts.

"As long as (Jordan) could find the resources" it will continue to buy back its official debt, Mr. Gammo said.

The Kingdom bought back some of its commercial debts at between 36 and 38 per cent and reduced it to \$895 million at the end of the year from \$1.2 billion.

It followed up efforts in this respect by signing a rescheduling agreement covering the \$895 million with the London Club of commercial banks.

## Iraq invites Arab envoy for talks on alleged detainees

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq has agreed to the visit of an Arab League envoy to Baghdad for discussions on Kuwaitis and foreigners who are being held in Iraqi prisons, diplomatic sources said Wednesday.

The diplomats said the Iraqi government had sent a message to the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo through its permanent representative, Nabil Nejm, inviting a league representative to the Iraqi capital.

No date has yet been set for the visit; nor has it been determined who will be the envoy, they said.

But the acceptance of such a visit does not mean that Iraq is acknowledging that the Kuwaiti assertions as accurate, said an Iraqi diplo-

mat. "We would like to end this affair once and for all, and are open to discussing all means and ways to do so," said the diplomat, who preferred anonymity.

Kuwait says that Iraq held back nearly 800 Kuwaitis and foreigners from the prisoner release that followed the end of the 1991 Gulf war which ended a seven-month occupation of Kuwait. Iraq has denied the charges.

Kuwait, which is running an international campaign to secure the release of the alleged detainees, has also been lobbying the U.N. Security Council that there should not be any lifting of the sanctions against Iraq without Baghdad meeting all of Kuwait's demands.

Non-Iraqi Arab diplomats also confirmed Baghdad's latest invitation to the Arab

League. "It seems that Iraq wishes to pursue its course of meeting the demands of the international community conditioned on a lifting of the sanctions against it," said an Gulf diplomat.

Baghdad has consistently denied the existence of Kuwaitis in its prisons, but Arab and foreign mediators say that senior Iraqi officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, have indicated that the issue could be discussed in a broad context of lifting the sanctions against Iraq.

"They also want a series of other measures that some of the Arab states should undertake, but all these statements were made on their own with no definite link that would establish beyond any doubt that there are Kuwaiti and foreign prisoners related to the Gulf crisis are held in

Iraq," said an Arab diplomat familiar with Arab League contacts with Baghdad.

Some of the mediators, including former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, have also said that Iraqi officials have pointedly said that many of the people whose names in a list provided by the Kuwaiti government were already in the emirate.

"They say that they have proof that these people are now living in Kuwait," said one of the mediators after a recent trip to Baghdad.

The Iraqis also say that some of the others in the list are long-time residents of Iraq and most of them have Iraqi nationality. The Iraqi officials ask: "Does Kuwait want us to arrest these people and deport them to Kuwait against their will?" the mediator added.

Human rights lawyers were involved in negotiations with the Kuwaiti government suggesting that Iraq might be persuaded to release Kuwaiti detainees if Kuwait frees the dozens of Jordanians, Palestinians and Iraqis jailed in the emirate, some of them on the death row, on charges of "collaborating" with Iraq during the August 1990 to February 1991 occupation.

But the effort appeared to have fizzled out after the Kuwaiti government dropped its initial interest in such a deal, diplomats said.

Fourteen Kuwaiti prisoners will return to their homeland Thursday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced in Cairo. The ICRC is pursuing efforts to reunite families torn apart by the seven-month conflict, it said.

## COLUMN

## Titanic survivor gets the watch her father wore

SOUTHAMPTON, England (AP) — Edith Haisman recognised the gold watch at once. Her father was wearing it when she last saw him waving from the deck of the sinking Titanic. "He put mother and me in lifeboat and said, 'I'll see you in New York.' We never saw him again," Mrs. Haisman, 97, said Tuesday. A company salvaging wreckage of the sunken ocean liner presented the watch to her at a hotel in Southampton, where the Titanic embarked on its fateful maiden voyage in 1912. The little watch is blackened and its hands are stopped at 11:05, not known to be a significant time. "I recognised the watch which my father wore on a gold chain on his waistcoat," said Mrs. Haisman, who was 16 when the ship sank. She is believed to be the oldest of about nine survivors living in Britain, the United States, France and Sweden. "I was in lifeboat Number 13. I always remembered that. My father was waving to us and talking to a clergyman, the Rev. Carter," said Mrs. Haisman, a frail, white-haired woman who attended the ceremony in a wheelchair. Mrs. Haisman, who lives in a nursing home in Southampton, spoke deliberately and carefully about the night of April 14-15, 81 years ago, when the Titanic was sliced open by an iceberg. "I remember everything and it was terrible," she said. "The Titanic went into the ice and I heard three bangs. Before we hit there had been terrific vibrations from the engines during the night as the ship was really racing over the sea. "As the lifeboat pulled away we heard cries from people left on the ship and in the water and explosions in the ship. There were lots of bodies floating. We kept on rescuing people and trying to cover them up against the cold. We were in the lifeboat nine hours. "I kept looking in the water for my father and when we reached New York we went to the hospitals to see if he had been picked up." The Titanic, then the world's largest liner, went down with the loss of 1,500 lives. Lifeboats got away with some 700 crew and passengers as the vessel broke up and sank nearly 4,000 metres to the ocean bed, 565 miles (900 kilometres) off Newfoundland.

Government puts Lenin burial on back burner

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian government has better things to do than worry about whether to evict Vladimir Lenin from his Red Square resting place and bury him, a spokesman for President Boris Yeltsin said Tuesday. "It's not the most important issue for the country," Anatoly Kravtsov told the Associated Press. "It has to be resolved, but we cannot think about the dead at the expense of our pressing needs." The campaign to move the father of the Soviet Union from the tomb where he has been on display for decades has been derailed by the success of Communists and nationalists in this month's parliamentary elections. Mr. Yeltsin had been building for the burial of the mummified, chalk-white remains of Lenin, whom generations of school children were taught to revere and whose brain is still preserved for scientific study. Just last month, the mayor of St. Petersburg had suggested that Lenin be buried next to his mother and two sisters in St. Petersburg's Volkovskoye Cemetery on Jan. 21, the 70th anniversary of his death in 1924. Moscow's mayor made a similar suggestion, saying Lenin's tomb are the resting place of other Communist luminaries had turned Red Square into "a burial site."

Doctors reattach 10 cut-off fingers

HONG KONG (APF) — Chinese doctors have successfully re-attached the 10 thumbs of both hands of a young worker after they were severed in an accident, it was reported Wednesday. The 19-year-old worker, who was injured at No. 153 Military Hospital in Zhenzhou City in Henan province, using micro-surgery techniques, successfully re-attached all 10 fingers, which were severed in a cutting machine. The Hong Kong News Service reported said Li had fully recovered the use of fingers after the surgery.

The Simplicity of Good Taste

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